

FOR MEN!

Bluebook

ADVENTURE IN FACT AND FICTION

25c

FEBRUARY

**FLYING SAUCERS
ARE THE BUNK!**

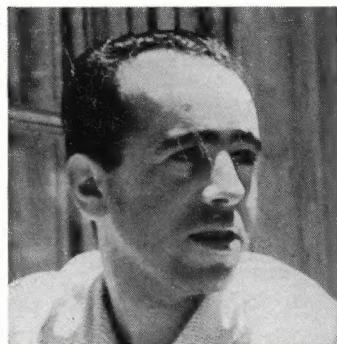
**HOW TO GET RICH
DRIVING A TRUCK**

The World's Fastest Freight? See pages 6-12

Who wrote what
in this month's
Bluebook

Purely Personal

As Grandma used to say, it makes a body wonder sometimes where these writing fellers get their ideas. And if you're of Grandma's persuasion as regards A. S. Fleischman's "The Girl from Lavender Street," this month's novel, you'll be happy to hear Mr. Fleischman was inspired to write this



dandy thriller by a one-inch newspaper story about elephants in Malaya. Any other questions?

It might clear things up a bit, however, if you hear that Mr. Fleischman started out in life as a magician rather than a writer, which would explain his ability to get 45,000 words out of a one-inch news story.

While in the Navy, Mr. Fleischman wrote a book on magic for amateurs, decided he liked the writing dodge, and has been at it ever since. He works at it in Monterey, Calif., where he lives with his wife, his two small children, and his card tricks.

Card tricks? Fleischman once wrote an entire novel based on a card trick. Had a good sale, too.

* * *

The author of "The Man Who Could Cure Hangovers," Martin Kane, whose revelations will be found on pages 56-61, is a New York advertising man (naturally!) who says this is his first fiction effort in almost twenty years. In the interim, he spent a slew of years with the United Press, where he wrote himself out every day in pliance of his trade. Now, tho, he's in a job where he talks more than he writes, and, being

a man who likes to write, he's spending his spare hours over a hot typewriter. "Hangovers" is a direct result.

He makes one stipulation as regards his biography and the *other* Martin Kane seen occasionally on TV: "My wife and I have a pact," he says, "to skewer anyone who utters the words 'private eye' in our presence."

* * *

Dan Tyler Moore, who wrote "The British Guiana Magenta" (Pages 46-49), is 45, a native of Washington, D.C. (Teddy Roosevelt was his Godfather), and is presently a businessman in the import-export business. A behind-the-scenes politico, he was FDR's patronage dispenser in Ohio, member of an



economic mission to Arabia, and presently lives in Cleveland where he maintains an active writing-lecturing career. He has made more than twenty trips to the Middle East in the past few years, and was the first American businessman to go into Yugoslavia after Tito lifted the veil.

He also has a brother-in-law who writes: columnist Drew Pearson.

* * *

In addition to "The Governor's Box" (Pages 13-17), William Sambrot will be remembered for "Report to the People," a nougat in our October issue. Bill is 32, devotes his full time to writing, and has sold to most of the top magazines, especially in the men's field. He reports having put in four years in

the ETO in WW II, and to having picked up battle stars for Normandy, Northern France and Central Europe, as well as the Soldier's Medal. An ex-lifeguard, retired beachcomber, and active skin-diver, his hobby at the moment is spearfishing and "body surfacing," which sounds like something that should be useful if anyone needs any old bodies.

* * *

Noel Houston says his selling us "The Tournament" (Pages 68-75) came at exactly the right moment; the day before, after years of trying, he finally shot a round of golf in the seventies.

The idea for "The Tournament," he reports, came to him during a National Left-Handed Golf Tournament, some years ago. A southpaw, obviously, Houston had been dubbing around all week, winning his matches and just getting by. "Then, the final round found me three down and three to go, just as the young man in my story. But, I had a wonderful Negro caddy who had been pulling me through all week, and what he did for me on those last three holes is detailed almost verbatim here."



Married and the father of two children, Houston came originally from Oklahoma, where he grew up hearing the cannon boom at Fort Sill. Besides the story in this issue, he also has written a score of other short stories, at least one successful novel, a great many plays, and has just returned from a stretch in Hollywood.

An active life indeed.

Bluebook

ADVENTURE IN FACT AND FICTION

February, 1954

MAGAZINE

Vol. 98, No. 4

Trademark Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

PHILLIPS WYMAN, *Publisher*

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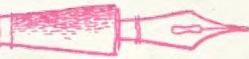
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The short stories and novel herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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PRO and CON



Address all letters to: THE EDITOR, Bluebook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, N.Y. All letters must be signed. None can be acknowledged or returned.

Added Info

To the Editor:

In its November issue, *Bluebook* carried an article by Mr. Will Oursler ("They Make You Like It") which has come to my attention through its mention of Mr. Ivy Lee, with whom I was associated for many years prior to his death in 1934.

The article indicated that it was Mr. Lee's idea that Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Sr., give away dimes. Mr. Lee stated publicly many times that giving away dimes was Mr. Rockefeller's own idea. Actually, Mr. Lee, from the beginning of the relationship, worked for Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.—from June 1, 1914, and, since Mr. Lee's death in 1934, our firm has continued to be employed by Mr. Rockefeller, Jr.

Mr. Lee's work for the Rockefellers did not include, however, either the advice to give away dimes or to set up the philanthropies which, as far as the major ones are concerned, were established before Mr. Lee entered Mr. Rockefeller's employ.

This letter is written not for the purpose of requesting any correction but merely to place in your hands accurate information on this subject.

T. J. Ross.

Ivy Lee & T. J. Ross
New York, N.Y.

Here We Go . . .

To the Editor:

I just bought the November issue, and, though I've never complained to an editor before, I guess my time has

come. ADVERTISING! What in the hell . . . !

Ever since buying my first BB, I've admired and appreciated the lack of advertising. In fact, I've appreciated everything in the magazine. But now it's just another mag.

But, don't get me wrong—I'll keep reading it, for I still enjoy it immensely; I just think it's lost some of its flavor of uniqueness.

By the way, the ads evidently affected your printer adversely, too. Pages 33 through 48 in my copy are completely and irrevocably upside down.

A/1c William G. Fawcett.
March AFB, Calif.

To the Editor:

. . . Keep up the good work and you will be a third-rater, just like the others.

Don Bonnet.

Crawfordsville, Ind.

To the Editor:

. . . Don't you people realize that one of your best advertising angles was your lack of advertising? I know a number of people who were attracted to your magazine by that one excellent feature . . .

. . . Such an action smacks of pulp and could develop into a bad habit.

Don Freeman.

Seward, Neb.

All critics: See November, 1953,
Bluebook, "Thinking Out Loud"—ED.

Geography

To the Editor:

In November Pro and Con, you say you could use a new atlas, plus a trip to Vancouver.

I think you could use a coast-to-coast tour of Canada. On page 66, you accuse Edmonton of being in British Columbia. It isn't; it's in Alberta.

But thanks again for a very enjoyable magazine.

M. W. Mosser.
Oshawa, Ont.

To the Editor:

I'm positive Edmonton still is in the province of Alberta. . . .

Boyd P. Hopiny.
Winnipeg, Man.

To the Editor:

Any fool knows Edmonton is in Alberta.

Rachel Davis.
Fargo, N. D.

We're not just any fool, Rachel.
But we're learning.—ED.



"I've been trying to tell you,
lady—you got the wrong kid!"

For the Birds

To the Editor:

After reading "Want a Killer for a Pet?" (November *Bluebook*), I would like to know where I can obtain a trained goshawk. I'm sure a bird of this type would mean lots of enjoyment for me and my three boys.

R. S. Ewing.

Los Angeles, Calif.

To the Editor:

Most of the facts in the article on falconry are untrue and do an injustice to the sport. The opinions expressed by the author lead the uninformed reader to believe that "a falcon is a bloodthirsty maniac who will rip open your face, gouge out your eyes, and steal the neighbor's chickens whenever he has the opportunity."

Actually, it is the other way around. A hawk when caught will never attack you, but merely is intent on getting away. Hawks will not attack poultry unless they are too sick or too old to hunt regular game.

Yvon Chouinard.

Secretary, Southern California Falconers Assoc.

Want to bet, Yvon?—Ed.

Shifty

To the Editor:

Regarding "Sports Cars, Clubs, and Me" (October *Bluebook*), by Joseph Lawrence, I am wondering what kind of 1939 Plymouth he has that has a "floorboard gear shift," as he calls it. The 1939 Plymouth that I had had the gear shift lever on the steering column.

W. Rea.

Walsenburg, Colo.

You must have had a special job, Mr. Rea. We rode in Lawrence's 1939 Plymouth a week ago Sunday; the gear shift still is mounted on the floor.—Ed.

Fair Warning

To the Editor:

I've been reading *Bluebook* for the past ten years without a break, and have enjoyed every issue. How you do it without advertising beats me; but keep up the good work.

Never before have I been so impressed with a story as I was with "Fair Warning." It is the most powerful warning against so-called "brush hunting" and "sound shooting" that I've ever seen. Every hunter should read it.

Living as I do, here in the midst of a vast hunting ground . . . it has a special significance. I brought the

story to school and showed it to my staff. They were so impressed they read it to their students, and I can tell you the students took it to heart, and the effect was wonderful.

They ought to make a short subject movie based on this one, and show it in every theater in the land.

John R. Daughenbaugh,
Principal.

Portola High School,
Portola, Calif.

By a Hair

It has been brought to our attention that your November issue carried an article by John T. Dunlavy entitled "Shave and a Haircut," which was of particular interest to us, as follows: "The Association of Master Barbers and Beauticians, a 27-year-old guild, is credited with bringing modern methods and sanitary standards to today's barber shops."

With reference to this paragraph, we wish to call your attention to the fact that our international union was organized in December, 1886, becoming an official part of the AFL at that time, and has continued actively in that capacity ever since.

The first convention of our International adopted a legislative program for licensing barbers, for sanitary laws, and Sunday closing, a program which has been successfully achieved.

At that time (in the late 1880's), no other organization except this one was interested in the barber's problems or

the business. The organization mentioned in your article was not even in existence then. . . .

W. C. Birthright,
President.

Indianapolis, Ind.

Pay Off

To the Editor:

I am writing this letter in thanks for a lot of real contentment and leisure. I wait every month for my copy of *Bluebook* to arrive; the stories are fine, a mixture to suit every taste.

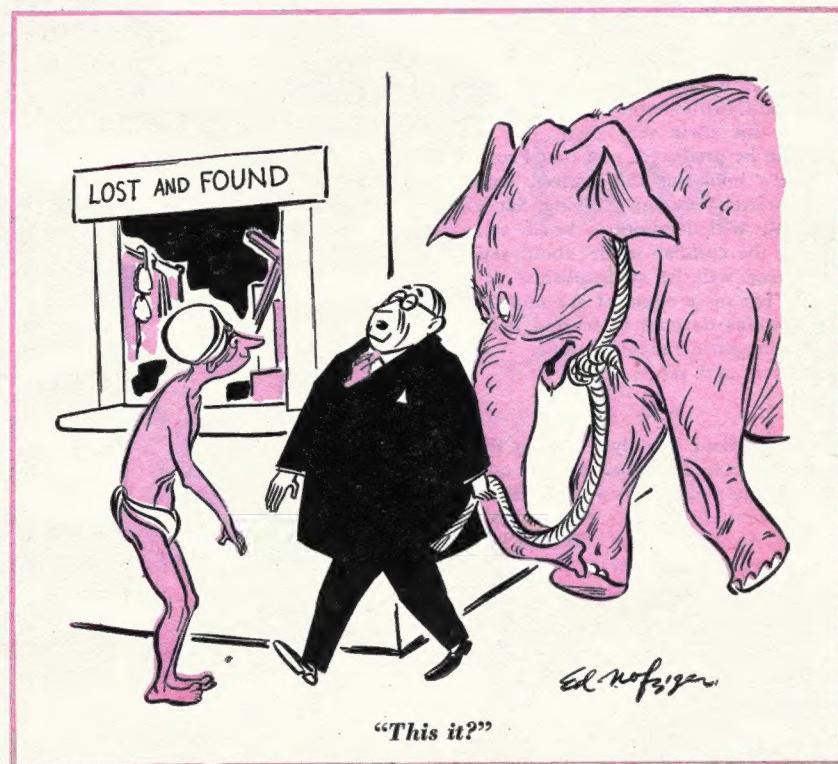
I remember *Bluebook* back as far as 35 years ago, when it was on the cheapest possible paper, but still a good book to read. Today it's one hundred percent better.

I especially enjoyed the article on how to win at poker in the November issue. I don't play the game personally, but an article by a man who knows how is fine for the suckers. Now I wonder if you could find someone who could do one telling the fans how to handicap the horses. The more I look at the racing forms, the more cockeyed I get.

J. Weatherill.

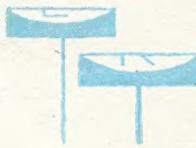
Orchard Park,
Hudson, Ohio.

Jay, you find a writer who knows how to handicap nags, and he sure as hell isn't going to be a writer any longer. In brief, we don't think there is any such animal.—Ed.





Thinking Out Loud



We've laid off the flying saucer ruckus all these months simply because the whole blooming business made so little sense to us that we were amazed even to hear intelligent grown-ups discussing it. The young followers of Captain Video, purveyors of comic books, manufacturers of cereal box tops—these lads we can understand making a big thing out of little people from Mars who strafe us in animated disc wheels. But to expect supposedly-intelligent editors, writers and scientists to take the popular conception even slightly seriously struck the boys here as reducing absurdity to childish nonsense.

Now, though, it develops that the saucer hokum is getting another big play, and more and more heavy thinkers are rushing into print with positive proof that the invasion of the little round men with fish-bowl heads is just around the next cloud. It would appear to be time to ask some questions.

This latter procedure is being done rather expertly on pages 26-32, this issue, by Donald H. Menzel, who, in addition to asking some questions, also comes up with some intelligent answers.

And who is Donald H. Menzel? Some scoffing lame-brain who just wants to see his name in print? Hardly. Mr. Menzel just happens to be professor of astrophysics at a place called Harvard, which in itself alone is enough to give his opinions a touch more credibility than you're apt to find in any two other so-called authorities who've staked out the subject for their very own.

It can be predicted, too, that Professor Menzel's book on the subject, entitled appropriately enough "Flying Saucers," probably will do more to brush away a few of the childish myths about saucers than ever will be accomplished at the corner bar or in some of the more lurid publications devoted to scaring hell out of the magazine-buying public.

Read it and relax.

* * *

Also at hand is a flyer from a distinguished book publisher which asks if the reading public is aware of the fact that Peter Freuchen, the celebrated Danish Arctic explorer, "is one of the only men alive who can prove that Peary actually reached the North Pole and refute *Bluebook's* recent controversial story that he did not?"

Well, sir, we don't know if the reading public is aware of this or not, and we've received no further communiqués from the publisher on the subject. All we do know is that, if the respected Mr.

This seems to us to be hardly the kind of information you keep to yourself in hopes someone will ask you about it. As the publisher says, there are few men left alive who have such proof; so let's get it on the record while those few still are with us.

* * *

Apropos of Lester David's dramatic piece in the December *Bluebook* ("Murder Allowed Here") pointing out that vehicular homicide is about the easiest way to kill a man and get away with it, there comes to view a story from the papers of last November 4th. According to this dandy little item, a gentleman named Alexander Lamkins, in Saranac Lake, N. Y., was fined \$10 for assaulting a game warden and a conservation official with an automobile, and \$62.50 for jacking deer.

Are you following this?

In other words, you bowl over a couple of human beings with your automobile, and it'll cost you ten bucks. But you do the same thing, virtually, to a deer, and the fine is six times as heavy. Or, figuring there were two human beings here, and only one deer, you have to conclude the fine was twelve tines as heavy in the case of the dumb animal.

Which is about all that needs to be said on that subject. Except maybe to add that, if you're going to run someone down with a car, make sure it's Aunt

... AND YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT 'EM



"You must be mistaken, Miss. I was demonstrating a bird call."

Clara, and not your next door neighbor's pet rattlesnake or bantam rooster. Costs a helluva lot less.

* * *

While on the subject of human beings, don't get the idea that Lester David's essay on pages 62-67 ("You're Braver Than You Think") is just one of those things we've thrown in to fill up the pages between a couple of good fiction yarns. It decidedly isn't, and since laying out some good *Bluebook* dough for Les's contribution, we've even picked up some additional proof that man is a much more stalwart individual than he thinks.

Take the case of old Will Reiche. Will is an ex-newspaper joe, now a United Nations official, who gets into a terrible sweat, and incipient heart murmurs, every time he reaches down to tie his shoelaces. He won't even run for a street car for fear of acquiring acid indigestion.

So, not too long ago, Will is standing on a subway platform in New York, when he suddenly sees a woman topple off same onto the tracks in front of an oncoming express train. Without thinking, Reiche jumps gloriously to the rescue, hustles the lady's carcass off the tracks, and leaps to safety himself not a moment before the train speeds by his left ear.

But, as he explained later—shaking and shivering at the temerity he'd shown—he never would have done what he did if he'd taken a moment to think about it. "I was four feet out in the air," he said, "and diving in front of that train before it suddenly occurred to me that 'Reiche, you're nuts! You're committing suicide. You'll never make it.'"

But he did make it, he was hailed as a hero—which he decidedly is—and, to this day, he's damned if he knows why. As he says, "I'm the last guy in the world I've have picked to do any such thing, and I wouldn't do it again in a million years."

But he would. As Les David points out, you're braver than you think. A lot braver.

* * *

Memo to spies, saboteurs, and fiction writers: You want to steal some government secrets? It's a cinch. Here's how:

Couple of weeks ago we wrote to a government man in Washington, asking him to get us some statistics on a new major weapon the boys were working on down his way and which we needed to back up an article we were preparing for your amusement. Back came his reply.

"Holy mackerel!" he screamed, "I can't get this now; it's under the heaviest possible restrictions. Can you wait until fall? I can get it easy then. When the World Series is on, you could walk away with the whole Pentagon, and nobody'd even notice you."

Moral: Baseball is dead.

MAXWELL HAMILTON

What Next!

BLITZKRIEG . . . In Tennessee, a legislator introduced a bill to repeal every law on the state statute books.

NWGBLGGHRHBSLI . . . In Liverpool, England, a bank decided to go along with the joke and cleared a check made payable to "Nwgblggrrhsli" after Accountant Leonard Harris decided it was made out to "North West Gas Board Liverpool Group, Group Headquarters, Radiant House, Bold Street, Liverpool, 1."

RIGHT ADDRESS . . . In Champaign, Ill., a girl who dropped in at the county jail one afternoon to visit a friend was informed by the sheriff that she was wanted for jewelry theft.

ANCIENT MAGIC . . . In Salt Lake City, a recent theory has it that Hopi Indian rain dancers use modern scientific principles when they build huge bonfires and toss their silver bracelets and other jewelry into the fire, where it is said to form silver oxide vapor—the same chemical that meteorologists use in seeding clouds.

FLYING BLIND . . . In Sacramento, when police arrested a man for driving into another car, they found he was blind in one eye, had 11/200 vision in the other, was receiving total blind aid from the state and was being provided with a reader by the federal government so he could attend college.

TRULY PERMANENT PERMANENT . . . In Memphis, a beauty shop operator who was combing a woman's hair—which had been piled high on top of her head and sprayed with hair lacquer the week before—found the ring she had lost, also the week before, and quietly slipped it onto her finger.

FREE CARS . . . In Rochester, you don't even have to drive to one drive-in theater. Patrons can take a bus and watch the show from theater-owned cars if they wish.

WHO ME? . . . In Pittsburgh, police raided a house and found two 1-gallon stills, 40 gallons of mash, 250 pounds of sugar and a woman who explained, "Somebody must have left all that there."

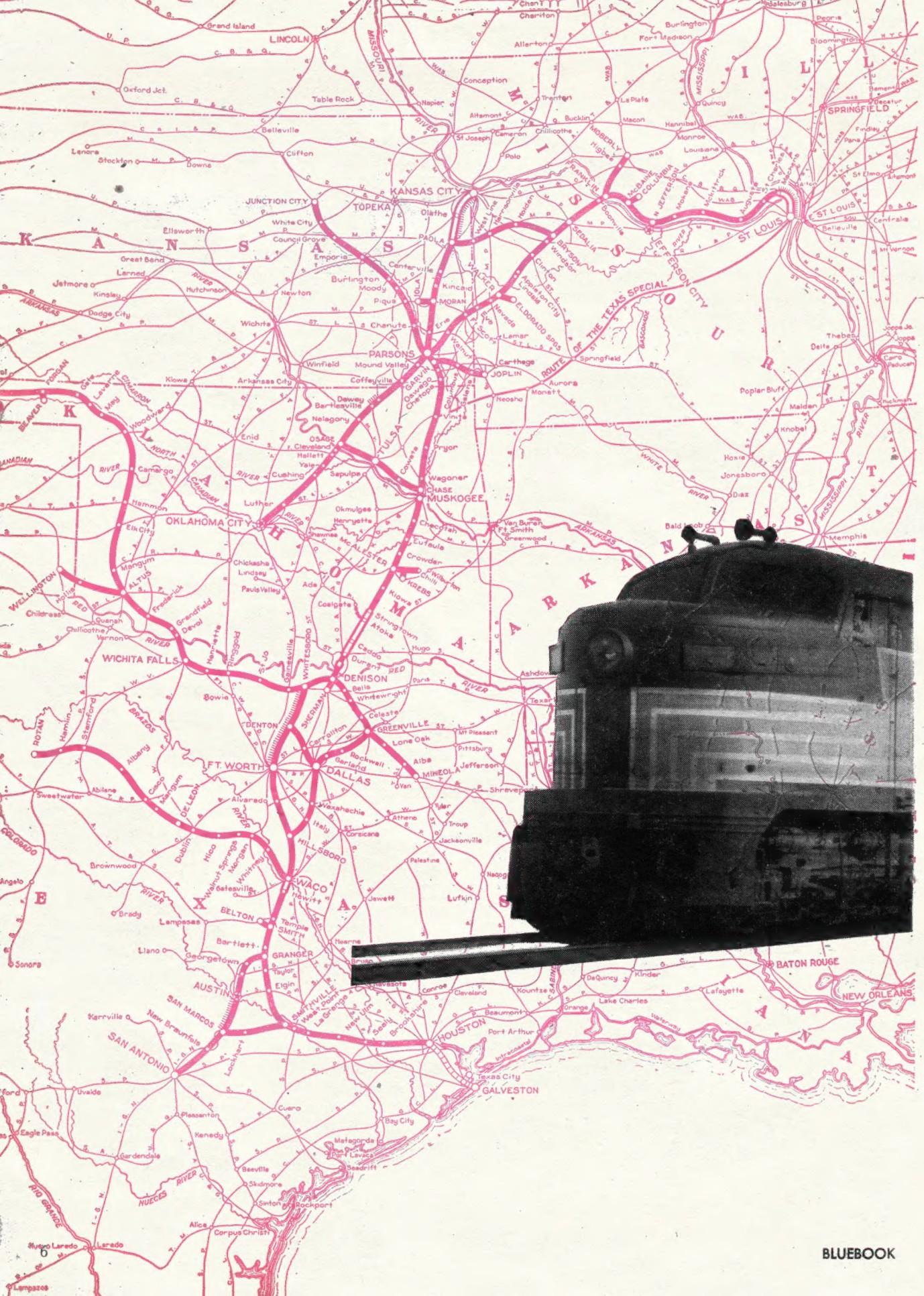
BALL AND CHAIN . . . In Mondovi, Italy, a court ruled that Andrea Vicino was not exceeding his rights when he kept his wife chained in their bedroom at night to keep her from going out.

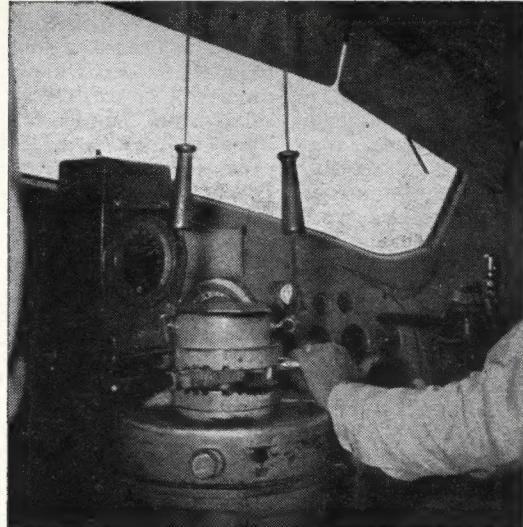
NAME BRANDS . . . In Paducah, Ky., postmen had no trouble with a letter addressed to "Embrace, the Pharmacist," delivered it promptly to "Hugg, the Druggist."

STORK . . . In Atlanta, Ga., not long ago, when Mrs. L. W. Booth felt sharp pains in her abdomen and rushed to the hospital thinking she had appendicitis, she gave birth to her first baby.

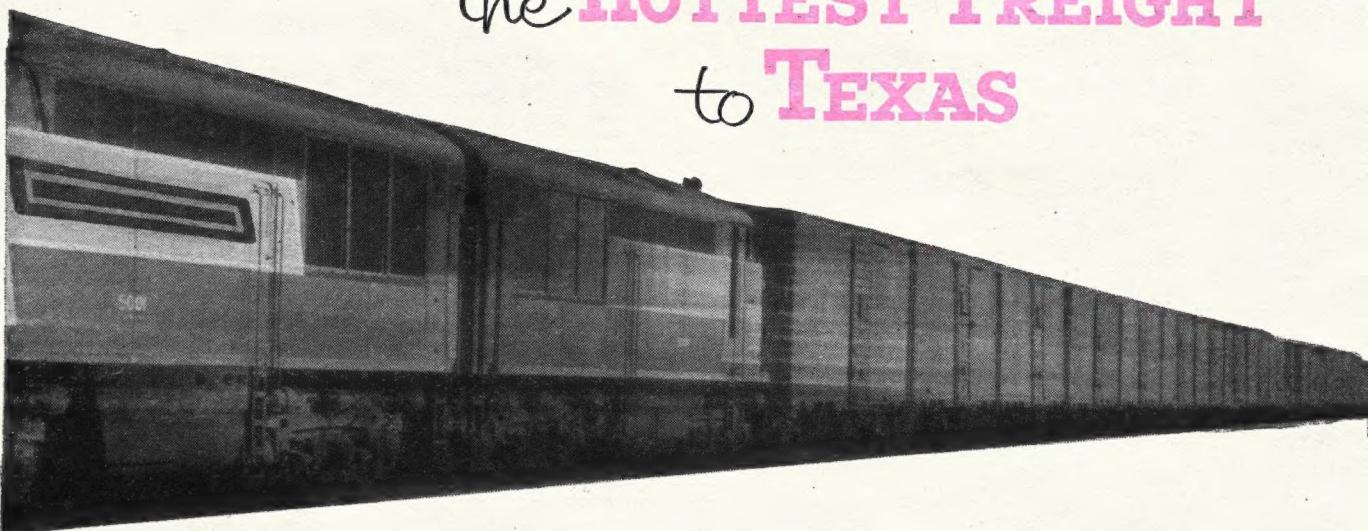
LOQUACIOUS . . . In Jaffrey, N. H., the city fathers decided to make things easier for visitors, erected 63 street signs.

SHOCK . . . In Llanfairpwll, Wales, after killing a woman by knocking her down with his car, the driver got out, looked at her and fell over dead himself.





I rode
the **HOTTEST FREIGHT**
to **TEXAS**



Even crack passenger trains
have to yield the right-of-way
to this diesel hot-shot,
which just possibly may be the
fastest freight train in the world.
By CLYDE CARLEY

The three-unit diesel rumbled idly as Engineer B. R. Schotte leaned out his cab window and watched impatiently the length of the 92-car train standing ready for the road in the North Yard at Parsons, Kansas. The high, single-lamp come-on signal on the main track burned a flashing green. Four watches in the locomotive cab said 7:56 A.M., which meant Schotte was 26 minutes late before he turned a wheel.

The train was merchandise freight No. 81, today's Katy *Komet* southbound, and, for the next 276 miles—the Southern Division—the hottest freight in the Southwest. It may be the hottest anywhere, but you may judge that later; it is certainly the fastest piece of merchandise I

have ever been aboard, and I haven't spent my life at home.

Mr. Schotte finally got his highball from the conductor at straight-up 8:00 A.M., half an hour late, and he notched the throttle open and the diesel set up its howling roar at our backs. With the sanding valve open, white dust boiled up from the rails as we snaked over onto the main, past the urgent green of the come-on signal, and Mr. Schotte took off for Texas with his 3,871 tons of freight.

Conductor J. P. Heatherly had brought the wheel report to the head-end a few minutes before, one copy for the engineer, showing 90 loaded cars, 2 empties (one tank and the caboose is shown as "empty") with 3,871 tons, most of it "long Texas" merchandise—meaning the cars were destined for deep-south Texas and beyond, some for export at Galveston. He had foretimed his wheel report at 7:56 A.M., but a conference of train and yard crew over a doubtful journal about 20 cars back—which the engineer had been watching impatiently—had fouled up his estimate.

The blathering commotion of a diesel starting a train, especially a freight, is the crescendoing noise I always associate with machinery just before it flies apart. It mounts, as the engine goes through its automatic phases of transition and as the eight notches of the throttle, numbered, click into sight; and with each number turned up you think this surely is all that engine can take. Then it seems to heave another gigantic breath in transition, and the generators scream an octave higher over the cannonading exhaust from cylinders, and, finally, about three notches after the explosion you expect that never comes, the locomotive settles to its cruising speed, which produces something like the cacophonous roar of a fleet of diesel trucks combined with a small city's electric power plant.

Now the diesel bucked a little, chewing sand to get the 92-car string rolling, and Engineer Schotte eased the throttle a notch as we crawled past Parsons station. The green beacon in the freight yard meant that the operator in the interlocking tower at Poole, half a mile south of Parsons, was ready for us. Of course he could change his mind in the five minutes needed for the *Komet* to start and fight up the gentle grade 1.1 miles to Poole Tower, where the line crosses the Frisco Railway; but, long before I could spot his signal, the fireman called "clear board," was echoed by Mr. Schotte, and we clattered over the crossing with the speedometer at 25 m.p.h. and climbing, and we had the railroad to ourselves.

In saying we "took off" for Texas, I want no argument from amateur

railroaders. This hot-shot will make only one stop in the next 276 miles. Over the Cherokee subdivision, ending at Muskogee, Okla., it averages 47 miles per hour. Over the Choctaw subdivision, Muskogee to Denison, Texas, it averages 37.4 m.p.h., or an average 42.2 m.p.h. for the Southern Division. It takes the sidetrack for nothing on this division. The *Texas Special*, the only thing likely to "put him in the hole," is an overnight passenger train, and this is a daylight operation.

When you consider the 3,871 tons hanging on the tail of this 350-ton diesel-electric locomotive, when you consider the curves and grades, the eleven crossings with other railroads—all requiring various slowdowns—this is not only a respectable average speed; it approaches the fantastic.

FLAK

The Battle of Waterloo is also known as Belle Alliance—that was the name of a farm occupied by the main part of the French army during the battle.

When Admiral Chester W. Nimitz was twenty-seven, he was already commander of a submarine.

Kreisler, the famed violinist, was wounded while serving with the Austrian Army in 1914.

—Harold Helfer

The average speed of *all* freight trains in the United States last year was 17.6 m.p.h!

Compare the *Komet*'s 47 m.p.h. on the Cherokee subdivision with that of the Katy (you should pardon the name) *Flyer*, a passenger "workhorse" train, with many stops and an average speed of 46.8 m.p.h. The alleged *Flyer* being already afflicted with its scheduled stops, and able to regain speed much more quickly, the dispatcher has no hesitation about slapping it into a siding in order to keep No. 81 rolling.

We topped the long gradual upgrade out of Parsons with the diesels laboring at about 40 m.p.h., and Mr. Schotte began to wind her up. The throttle rested in notch 8, where it was to stay most of the trip. The cab rocked and swayed, something like the motion of a fast ship. It is easier riding than the old steam engines, but, as long as tonnage moves over steel rails spiked to ballasted wooden ties, there will have to be some give, or

else pound the guts out of locomotives in short order.

The diesel suddenly surged forward, almost taking me off my feet, and I was glad to accept the proffered swivel-chair seat between the fireman and engineer. The speedometer needle edged rapidly up to 55, the speed limit for freight trains on the Southern Division. Passenger trains 75. However, it is possible they gave me some old time-tables (of the variety For Employees Only) because I was about to see some holes knocked in both these speed limits before completing my survey of the Katy's race-track division.

We blasted past the tiny Labette station, sending dust and stray paper fifty feet above its roof, at 8:19. Mr. Schotte had lost four minutes in about ten miles, since they give him 15 minutes to make Labette on the timetcard.

There is a moderate downgrade beginning at milepost 407 (measured from St. Louis), as I happened to note, and the speed needle flicked up to 59 and touched 60 momentarily, or I am blind. If any Katy vice-presidents happen to be reading this, I am blind. I might say that Mr. Schotte reached for his brake lever, but I had asked him a question and Mr. Schotte is such a polite gentleman he immediately answered and it took him ten minutes to find the brake lever. The speedometer hung on 59.

"No," Mr. Schotte answered my question, "nothing in the Rule Book says we must give warning whistles except at crossings, but you're liable to find a section crew working around most any curve." He was blowing the standard grade-crossing signal on blind curves, and I had asked about that. "Their foreman is supposed to look out for them, but this 81 bats along so fast you can slip up on them before you know it."

As if by arrangement for his explanation, on the next blind, curve—which the engineer duly alerted with his air horn—we slipped up on a section crew, still doing 59 m.p.h. About half of the dozen men had stepped off the track; the others were squarely on it, some picking up tools and others tugging at the small four-wheel equipment car. All were as busy as boys fighting snakes. Mr. Schotte's hand rested calmly on the air-brake lever until he was sure the men with the hand-car were going to make it safely. They dumped it off the rails with about 20 yards to spare, as I judged; in any event, had I been on the section crew it was a matter of at least 50 yards after I would have resigned the job.

The three of us leaned back in our swivel chairs at the same time. The fireman was W. E. Limes, qualified as an engineer and waiting for a reg-

ular run to open. On Katy engines, there is a short cord hanging from the cab roof on the fireman's side. With this he can blow the air-horn when the engineer has his hands full of other train problems.

"Clear board," Fireman Limes announced, and we slammed through Chetopa at 55 m.p.h. It was 8:34 as we rattled the station windows. Mr. Schotte had not only gained back his four minutes lost but had made up another minute of his late start. Very handy running in some 25 miles of track.

I MENTIONED four watches in the diesel cab. The other extra one, besides mine, was that of Division Superintendent C. T. (Charlie) Williams, of Muskogee. Superintendent Williams didn't check his watch very often, being apparently content with Engineer Schotte as a "runner," nor did he have my curiosity about the speedometer. There are times when a good railroad official instinctively just happens to be looking the other way.

What was I doing on the head end of the Katy's ballast scorcher? This is a question I have asked myself often, given cause to think of it as we rocked and rolled in some diesel cab and bore down on a blind curve that looked sure to be straightened out or soon to have a locomotive in the ditch. In this instance I was aboard to fill the *Bluebook* editor's need of a rip-snorting freight train story. He wanted the fastest freight in America, according to his wire.

There ain't no such thing, I regret to say. Because the different hot-shots run on different railroads, each with its own mileage, tonnage rating, grades, curves and sundry other problems, no prudent railroad man will claim his freight as the fastest. Passenger schedules are a different matter; they can be checked closer. Freight train *schedules* are not good comparisons, since the schedules are meant for shippers' eyes, and a student of railroading would give you long argument about how consistently certain roads meet their freight schedules. You could check closely on freight schedules as to actual performance, I suppose, if you had a court order and several weeks of spare time.

I chose the Katy and its relatively new *Komet* service from St. Louis to Texas for several reasons. This train is scheduled to leave St. Louis at 7:00 o'clock (Baden Yard) every evening, and to arrive at Fort Worth (Ney Yard) at 6:30 p.m. the next evening. I'd heard from several railroad sources that the train had an annoying habit of either leaving St. Louis late, waiting on connections or cars from factory sidings, or else losing so much

time on the Eastern Division, which winds along with the Missouri River most of the way, that when it was delivered to the Southern Division boys at Parsons for the run to Denison, Texas, there was a lot of loose gambling going on as to whether they could put 81 into Texas on time and still have wheels on it.

The Cotton Belt's *Blue Streak* until a few years ago was advertised as the country's fastest freight, without much argument. Their mileage from St. Louis to Fort Worth is comparable, 760 miles against the Katy's 759. The *Blue Streak* nowadays leaves St. Louis 10 minutes later than the *Komet*, by schedule, and arrives at Fort Worth two hours later than the *Komet*. By this time the Katy yard crews at Ney already have cut out the "short Texas" cars for Dallas and other northern Texas cities, and the "long Texas" train for Waco, San Antonio, Houston, Galveston and foreign ports is long gone.

Offhand, as an amateur railroader myself and looking at an accurate Katy map, I wonder why the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad Company ever jumped into the Texas freight competition. Their line starts out of St. Louis going straight north, using trackage rights on the Burlington. They pick up their own tracks at Machens, and follow the winding Missouri River, bearing straight west and sometimes northwest until Franklin, Missouri. This is no way to get to Texas. The same thought apparently occurred at this point to the builders, in the 1870's, for at this town they cross the river, abandoning Kansas City as a goal, and bear southwesterly to Parsons, Kansas.

At Parsons, the northernmost point of Superintendent Williams' territory, the railroad seems to have made up its mind to be Texas-bound, crossing what is left of Kansas and all of Oklahoma with a route singularly straight and direct to Denison, near the Red River. At Parsons, too, for layman's practical purposes, the *Komet* becomes another train. Cars from Kansas City and two other branches are combined and blocked in the train—a process of more than two hours, which leaves cars for various destinations and connections coupled together in "cuts." Then it remains a solid train until they reach Denison, where the same yard-switching process goes on but doesn't take so long (45 minutes), thanks to the work already done in Parsons.

If you draw a rough, huge X and hold the two strokes of it together, making your X crudely tall (see map), you'll have an idea of the Katy's layout minus branch lines—and also about as accurate as the maps in public timetables of any road. The

elongated body of such an X is Mr. Williams' 276-mile division, where engineers and crews are expected to repair the running sins committed earlier and make up for trackbuilders' errors in the 1870's, delivering No. 81 to Texas crews on time to do with as they will.

We stormed through Welch at 8:47, and held the pace for Blue Jacket at 8:53 A.M. Neither are large towns. As the depot wags like to say, if the *Komet* ever comes through sideways, it will take both towns with it. Engineer Schotte now had made up four minutes on the timecard, which is to say he was still 26 minutes late. At about milepost 429, south of Blue Jacket there is a healthy curve, marked with a large "65" sign, in the Katy's manner of marking speed limits on curves for their passenger trains. We took the curve at 58 m.p.h. and saw, far down the track, a herd of cattle on the right of way. Two men on horseback were moving them from one pasture to another.

This is a disconcerting sight to any engineer. It is considerably more disconcerting to a writer, usually desk-bound, who just came along for the ride. The diesel still roared at 55 m.p.h., as Mr. Schotte was making a bit of grade along here, and the whining gears gave me thoughts of a super-speed meat grinder. I'm happy to report, however, that the cowboys herded their beesves through the pasture gate in better than nick of time, except for one frisky young steer whose tail must be several inches shorter at this writing. Only one animal does an engineer dread to hit more than a cow, and that is a middle-sized hog. The porker is more solid and greasy; if he gets under the wheels the chances are good to flip a locomotive off the tracks. Worst of all road hogs, and dreaded by engineers, are the oil and gasoline trucks at grade crossings. Such a crash nearly always means a bath of gasoline-fed fire. The Katy hasn't hit one in several years.

THE Katy line over this division, which is the concern of our story, follows the old Texas Trail wagon route of Indian Territory days. So, too, does U.S. automobile highway 69, paralleling the tracks for long stretches. Both the railroad and highway touch the same large towns in Oklahoma, and often the two run along so close together that you could throw a Rule Book and hit a motorist racing with the train. Happily for the Oklahoma and transient population, grade crossings with this highway have been eliminated by over- and underpasses. But there remain ample county-road crossings, and main roads leading off the highway to bypassed towns. Mr. Schotte plays that two-

longs-short-long warning on his air horn with more frequency than a visitor in the cab will appreciate, for the horn is only about two feet directly over your head, and while the Katy is experimenting with the "musical" chime horns offered by some companies to assuage the nostalgia of old steam-whistle fans, most of their main-line engines bear and blow the factory-installed air horns patterned after ocean-going foghorns. It lifts the short hair on your neck and rattles your eardrums like rocks in a wash-tub.

Three times on the Cherokee subdivision, Brother Schotte played "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder," with the *sforzando* treatment and tremolo overtones, and once in particular I thought a pretty lady driver's name not only had come to the top of the heavenly list but that she would beyond doubt be boosted halfway to her selected cloud by the nose of diesel 205-A.

It was a fine Indian summer day, last October 13th, visibility excellent, and I know she saw our 4,000-foot train. She was hotrodding a red Pontiac sedan on U. S. 69, just north of Pryor, Okla., at that time paralleling us on the left, and she turned right to enter Pryor on a thoroughfare called, appropriately enough to this, Squaw Hollow Road. The grade crossing is protected with a cluster of red flashing signals.

Mr. Schotte anticipated her and began blowing the standard warning half a mile before his X crossing-whistle post came up. Maybe she thought he was flirting with her. The Pontiac was pulling ahead of us and we were doing an honest 55 by the meter, when she slowed for the highway's long right curve. By now Mr. Schotte had completed the regulation blasting, and was fluttering the horn with short, sharp pleadings. Superintendent Williams who had taken the fireman's seat some time before, was holding the fireman's horn cord, ready to take over if Mr. Schotte let up. The gal in the Pontiac slowed, then put on some speed to beat us to the crossing.

It would have been a tie. Mr. Schotte cut his throttle. Fireman Limes lunged for the third whistle cord in the cab and added the reverse horn to the din. This apparently made up the lady's mind for her. The red Pontiac burned rubber for at least 75 feet, and we plowed over the crossing with both horns open and a neat 12 inches to spare between diesel and red fender. Mr. Schotte had four white knuckles on the air-brake lever, almost like ping-pong balls.

Those are pretty teeth you have, lady; we saw them all when your

mouth was wide open. Too nice to scatter over half of Pryor. Yes, the speed of a long, lumbering freight is very deceptive, especially Katy's No. 81 when he's running late. Mr. Schotte has been working the head-end of trains since 1915, and the right side of the cab since 1938. Nearly every engineer of 38 years background has struck autos at crossings, and probably killed people; he doesn't want to talk about it and he doubly doesn't want to do it again. Friend, if you dispute the railroad's right of way, write your Congressman. It has been upheld by the Supreme Court often enough. But do not argue with a 350-ton locomotive being pushed by the momentum of some 4,000 tons of freight. Even at 10 m.p.h., it will pulverize you.

Depending on track conditions and weather, a full mile is required to stop a train at speed. It may be checked in a third that distance, if the track isn't wet or icy, with a "big-hole" emergency application of air, which means releasing the 85 pounds per-square-inch pressure from the entire train line at one full sweep of the air lever, sometimes called "wiping the clock." But the engineer who big-holes a train stands a good chance of injuring his own passengers (crew of five on freights) and a certainty of flattening the wheels on most of the train; then he is not only disabled far from the shops, but has a repair bill on wheels that will run to several thousand dollars. Sure, an engineer will big-hole his brakes, if he can see the definite danger stalled or trapped on the rails. But, as in the case of the lady of Squaw Hollow, by the time she gave any sign of making up her mind, nothing the engineer does with his brakes in that last 1,000 feet or so to the crossing will greatly alter results or impact.

THERE was an edge of frost in the air and, withal, a fine day for railroading. In the hot-water-heated cab, I hung my topcoat over a sign that said DANGER 600 VOLTS and a company notice warning of the folly in overheating diesel engines. Explosions, usually from ignition of vapor in the crankcase, had injured six employees on the system. Kindly desist, or else. An overheating diesel sets up an insistent bell-ringing just behind the engineer.

But I jumped ahead of our story in discussing the lady in red.

We blew into Vinita at 9:05, now 8 minutes ahead of the timecard and 22 minutes late, net, and Fireman Limes intoned, "Clear board," then on a new note, "Red order board!"

Mr. Schotte dumped about 12 pounds of air under his train, and thus put the iron-shoe clamps on 760

wheels. The monster snake growled down to 15 m.p.h. The grinding brakes and squatting action of the train seem to be transmitted through the seat of your pants.

"Had to cut down to fifteen, anyway, for the interlocking here," Mr. Schotte said resignedly, as Fireman Limes leaned out his window to curve an arm through the train-order hoop sticking out from the trackside order post. The interlocking here is another crossing with the Frisco Lines, and an interlocking, briefly, is a system of signals at any collection of two or more tracks which is electrically operated and as nearly foolproof as man can make it—only a crazed electrical genius, given a free hand, could possibly set up a conflicting movement of trains. All switch-lever boxes are locked and sealed. Throwing a green signal to one track automatically throws red to all possible tracks interfering with that route.

WE rolled past the station, still at 15, and with a clear board for the interlocking. The fireman unfolded a wad of yellow flimsy sheets and handed one set to the engineer. Another hoop lower on the order post held flimsy sets for the conductor and rear-end brakeman, who would take them off as the caboose came by. Mr. Schotte handed the order and clearance card to me and I read:

OCTOBER 13, 1953
TRAIN ORDER NO. 577
TO C & E SOUTHWARD TRAINS
AT VINITA
ALL TRAINS USE NEW TRACK BETWEEN
MP 474 AND MP 477
REDUCE SPEED TO 10 MPH MP 474
POLE 15 TO MP 474 POLE 19
AND 30 MPH MP 474 POLE 19 TO MP 476
POLE 35
AND 10 MPH MP 476 POLE 35 TO MP 477
BFD (Dispatcher B. F. Daley).
MADE COMPLETE 6:35 AM
MULLEN, OPERATOR [MP-milepost]

That did it. There are forty company telephone posts to the mile, or 132 feet apart, and you can see that the dispatcher (often called the de-layer, with no great affection) left no doubt as to how he wished Mr. Schotte's train handled just south of Chouteau, at milepost 474 and for the next three miles. The slowdown to 30 m.p.h. was no help, and the two slow orders to 10 m.p.h. added up to as much damage as a full stop. Mr. Schotte estimated this would cost him 15 minutes, which it did.

We barrelled through Big Cabin at 9:16 and Pryor at 9:33, notwithstanding the dame in the red suicide sedan, and No. 81 had made up 10 minutes. At this rate he would have been no more than 5 minutes late, net, at the division point of Muskogee, a sliver of

time the yard crews might well have saved in refueling and inspecting the diesel there.

The slowdown south of Pryor is for the relocation of seven miles of track, where the Grand River Dam Authority's doings will flood that much of the old track. It is all done at the taxpayers' expense; if you care, including the new track.

Incidentally, this train had been put out of St. Louis 45 minutes late, confirming my rumors, the evening before. I prepared to desert No. 81 along with Engineer Schotte and the rest of the crew at Muskogee, where Engineer R. P. Cullar and a new crew would take over. It turned out that the *Komet* left Muskogee 40 minutes late by the timecard, and I figured not even Casey Jones could make Denison on time this day, the upcoming Choctaw subdivision being much tougher for grades, curves and general railroading.

This will teach me never to bet against No. 81 being the hottest freight on wheels. In the dispatcher's office that afternoon I listened in as he took the telephone report:

No. 81 in at Ray Yard, Denison, 2:25 P.M., five minutes ahead of the schedule.

Somehow, I'm just as happy I didn't watch Mr. Cullar at first hand make up 40 minutes time over the 159 miles of the Choctaw subdivision. I had another plan, and before it was over I wished I'd stayed in the dispatcher's office to watch that operation, too.

With Mr. Schotte and his travel-scuffed grip, I walked down to the station, making conversation, after we oversaw the checkup of the diesels.

You might be interested in knowing that this three-unit product of General Motors Electro-Motive Division, EMD's F-3 Model, has one 16-cylinder engine per unit. It cranks up a total of 4,500 horsepower, good for a tractive effort of 172,500 pounds. The full locomotive is 152 feet long, lacking one-half inch, and weighs 698,400 pounds. All 24 wheels are drivers, 40 inches high and geared to 12 traction motors. She carries in her belly tanks 3,600 gallons of fuel oil, 600 gallons of lubricating oil and 690 gallons of water for the engine cooling system. And 48 cubic feet of dry white sand to cure wheel-slippage, curse of the railroad industry. The engine is geared 62/15, or slightly better than 4 to 1, with a top rated speed of 65 m.p.h.

"We'd have just about made it, without those slow orders," Mr. Schotte said as we walked stationward. He grinned sheepishly. "Don't know what the boss was thinking—had her over the speed limit there a few times." He didn't seem worried.

Superintendent Williams, who runs the hottest division of the Katy, both

for speed limits and density of traffic, is 42 years old. This makes him easily the youngest super on the Katy, and I would hate to start looking through all railroads in America to find a division superintendent so young.

Mr. Williams has the reputation of a high-wheeler. The term originally applied to engineers, like Casey Jones for instance, who were capable men but inclined to rip the Rule Book and run their locomotives at speeds they considered safe. Anything that kept wheels and rails together was safe. But, before I tell you a little story which I picked up about Super Williams, the high-wheeler, and confirmed among switchmen and trainmen, you should know that on the east wall of the Muskogee station hangs a large silver medal. Mr. Williams' men (and he is the first to give credit to them, not himself) won permanent possession of the plaque in 1950 for the best safety record of any division for three consecutive years; accident ratio of 2.91 per million man hours.

It seems that not too long after Williams became a superintendent at the unheard-of age of 38, the Katy had a special train of passengers out of Texas for the Kentucky Derby. Passenger business being what it is for any railroad (only 5c of the Katy's income dollar), it is a good idea for

officials to take good care of any special trains snared from the competition. Thus we find Mr. Williams aboard the Derby Special, at Denison, ready to shepherd it over his division. His first shepherding move was to halt the *Bluebonnet*, their Kansas City-Texas passenger, and rob its new diesel power, giving the engineer in exchange the not-too-well maintained old 4-6-2 Pacific steamer, which had been assigned the Special. Nostalgic tales be damned, the most grizzled old hoghead of steam days won't give up his comfortable diesel cab for the iron horse without a fight.

That fight being a short one (although Williams was to learn later that the *Bluebonnet* "threw craps" three times in finishing its run, due to hot axles on the steam engine), the Derby Special then found itself parked behind a red block at Denison for the *Texas Special*, regular No. 2. All Katy working timetables state boldly in several places: "No. 2 is superior to all trains."

The young super stepped to a track-side telephone set, which connected him with the dispatcher. North of Denison, to Stringtown, the Katy has its only double track, 58 miles of it.

"You got anything on that other track, southbound?" Williams asked the dispatcher, who allowed it was clear.



"Give it to me, for the Derby Special."

"You want to run around No. 2?" The dispatcher was hesitant.

"Yep. We're starting now." The regular train had a scheduled stop at Durant, about 20 miles up the line; the Derby train had no stops except to change crews.

As he hung up the phone, the light turned green for the crossover and Williams climbed into the diesel cab to give the engineer his new running orders. The *Texas Special* just then began to move out, and the Derby Special began to overhaul it, running wrong main. The two trains gathered speed, side by side, and, as the diesel bawled and bucked through a tornado of sand under her wheels, Mr. Williams turned his gaze somewhat smugly on the train he was gradually passing. At that moment the shade of a Pullman suddenly was raised on No. 2. In the window's light, Mr. Williams stared into the annoyed face of the president of the railroad.

It would be a simple matter for the prexy to find out who was running an extra around his hot varnish. On a railroad, this operation may be compared to speeding your little cloud around God's.

Well, it was done, and Williams wasn't one to worry about it. He rode the Derby train on to St. Louis, over Frisco tracks from Vinita—which is also the route of the *Texas Special*—and beat No. 2 there by more than half an hour. At the Union Station, there were numerous high officials gathered to meet the road's president, and his entourage, on No. 2. The stewed situation was not improved by Mr. Williams getting off a train that should be behind the president's, and one powered by a diesel he had apparently pulled out of his hat.

Nothing ever was heard from the president about the matter. It was high-wheeling, but it was also good railroading.

My other snide little plan called for catching the *Komet* on a day when it was running even later out of Muskogee, and see what they could do over the Choctaw, last chance to make up lost time into Texas. They unwillingly proved to be only negligibly late every day until Friday, October 30th. Then I learned the crew for the Choctaw had been called for 10:50 A.M. The schedule says leave Muskogee 10:15.

I mounted the cab occupied today by Engineer W. R. Byrd, and we were leaving town at 11:10 A.M., 55 minutes late, with 74 loads, 2 empties and 3,928 tons. Mr. Byrd had a shorter train than I'd been on with Engineer Schotte, but a meaner one for tonnage—particularly for running up on

the engine when slack action developed on downgrades.

Today we were flying the green flags, indicating a second section of No. 81 was following. Diesels, however, have done away with the fixed flags; these were green rectangles of metal sticking out like flared ears.

Mr. Byrd tore out for Texas, and didn't check his rush until we had made 30 miles in about 40 minutes. Among the fistful of flimsies on his order hook, Mr. Byrd had one saying that First 81 had right over No. 6 (the *Flyer*) Muskogee to Stringtown, where the double track begins. It was up to the passenger train to stay out of our way.

"He's giggin' us a little," Mr. Byrd growled good-naturedly, as Fireman Larry Weldon called, "Yellow board," and the engineer worked his air. To "gig" an engineer is to delay him in any manner; they resent it. Mr. Byrd now had to stay under 30 until the next signal, and both he and the fireman strained to see it. "Green!" Mr. Byrd got it first, and began to widen out on his throttle. The delay proved to be from a Sperry Rail-Detector Car, an odd-looking vehicle of about 50-foot length, yellow with a silver top, which once a year comes to most railroads on a rental basis—and a fancy hourly rate—to spot any defective rails by some photoelectrical magic. It squirts yellow paint on any defect found and grinds merrily on. We passed the Sperry in the siding at Canadian at 12:14 P.M., now 57 minutes late.

To spare you such running details, let me say that here began the wildest ride I've ever had on a freight train. Mr. Byrd was a man "bucking the extra board," as was all the crew that day, meaning he was called when needed and had no regular assignment. He has been rated an engineer only eight years, and a fireman for three years before that, coming up from the Muskogee roundhouse. Assistant Superintendent A. B. McCormick, who accompanied me that day, says this is where they get their best engineers. Mr. Byrd was working his engine for all he could get out of it. On speed-limited curves he applied his air before he pinched down on the throttle, and coming out of all slowdowns he had the throttle wide open again a few seconds before the air brakes were fully released.

He was making up time every foot of the way. We met No. 6 at Kiowa, the signal turning green to indicate he had cleared the switch just as we came in sight, at 1:01 P.M. Three minutes gained.

"Now let's wind 'er up," said Fireman Weldon. "It's pay-day in Texas."

"Every time I get it over 55," said Mr. Byrd, "this writer fellow takes a

picture." I had been experimenting with my modest Kodak and flashgun, which sometimes takes a picture for me, usually not.

Mr. Byrd was calmly telling us how he had traded a 175-pound hog for a 225-pound calf, the prices of beef and pork being at such odds, when I left them and walked back through the diesel to the trailing A unit. An A unit has controls; the trailing unit faced backward, for convenience at terminals. I knew from head-brake-man Ray Kious that some long curves and downgrades were coming up, and I thought I might snap some fair pictures of the galloping train. It's nice and quiet, comparatively speaking, in the trailing cab of a locomotive. This is a good thing, because walking past those 16-cylinder diesels hammering at full RPMs, as you brush against them on the narrow walkway, leaves you deafened.

The back cab has a working speedometer, although the control instruments are inoperative while it is trailing. I leaned out the roll-down window, watched the tall grasses beat flat for 10 to 15 feet at the side by the diesel's passing. Then I forgot to take my pictures until we were down that grade which had been recommended. And I was out of flashbulbs or I could show you a picture of the speedometer when it touched 66 m.p.h.

THIS is too fast to run a 3,900-ton freight train around curves, in my considered opinion, although I had the small comfort that it wasn't too fast to suit the Assistant Superintendent, up front with Mr. Byrd. That cheerless speedometer hung around 65 until we hit the double track at Stringtown—only 30 minutes late now—and thereafter Mr. Byrd found no reason to drop much below 60 until we reached the Staley interlocking, at Red River. The tower-man was holding a Frisco short freight at the crossing for us, and the way was green. From here to Ray Yard is a six-mile grade, preceded by three reverse curves, but Mr. Byrd managed to hold about 20 m.p.h. speed on the rough home stretch. I had rejoined him in the front cab. He had propped open the sanding lever with a doubled match cover and we boiled over the Ray Yard Limit at 2:37 P.M. The timecard says due at 2:30 P.M.

He had made up 48 minutes on the Choctaw. And they tell me the *Komet* does this all the time. Their percentage of on-time arrival at Denison is advertised at 96 percent.

I'm satisfied. And I've watched enough high-wheeling over the shoulders of *Komet* engineers to retain my belief that this is the hottest freight going—at least while it's on the Katy's Southern Division. •



The Governor's Box

Out of the thousands of atolls in the Pacific, all they had to do was find one that looked like an ice cream cone—a chocolate ice cream cone. It was worth five million if they did.

By WILLIAM SAMBROT

■ Don't ask me why Muller picked on me for his proposition. There were maybe twenty men in British Charlie's, sweating, grousing, cursing. Drinking their rum, scheming empty futile schemes, dying by degrees in the damp suffocating heat of Saigon. Maybe it was because I wasn't quite so wind-broken, or sagging bellied—and again, maybe I looked simple.

"Ever do much skin-diving?" he said. I looked at him, taking in the hard, full-fleshed face, the tiny sharp eyes, the mouth like a shark's. He was a short squat man, in a country where the sun and heat dried up a man, took away the flesh and left a bag of bones and emptiness. Which meant he didn't stay around for any length of time.

"Everyone dives around here," I told him. "But there's nothing left to dive for. No shell. Natives have the pearls sewed up—"

"I'm a geologist," he said, choking a little on his rum. "I'm looking for an outcropping of a certain kind of rock. I need a skin-diver to spell me. Work won't be under ten fathoms."

Geologist, the man said. I looked at him, taking in the big red veins in his nose, the brutish slant of his features. I'm a college man myself, although you'd never know it to hear me talk. I know another college man when I see one, and Muller wasn't it.

I shrugged. If you've ever longed for the feel of a sea breeze, the long swell of deep water beneath your feet, you'll know why I jumped at the proposition. "I can see rock as well as the next one," I told him. "When do we start?"

"Right now," he said, then he hesitated, his sly eyes half-shut. "Got any loose ends? I mean—wife—woman—"

I looked at him and he smiled. British Charlie's is the end of the world. No one has any ties in there.

THE *Bluefin* was a sweetheart. A battered old bucket with plenty of guts concealed under her seaworthy hull. She was rigged fore and aft with a powerful boom and winches operating off her diesel. She had gear to spare. Air pumps for deep-diving and the latest, too. Two men could work almost any place in her. She had a power launch which was equipped with a small one-lunger for pumping air in water too shallow or dangerous for the bigger *Bluefin* to work. A very neat set-up—and expensive. I looked at Muller with more respect.

He headed her out into the South China Sea and for three days we chopped along. Not once did Muller mention geology or rock formations. There weren't any books on board, but there was plenty of rum, a couple of spear-guns, spring-operated, and a rusty old .45 hanging in a scabby holster alongside a powerful rifle clipped to the cabin bulkhead. But no books—on geology or anything else.

There were no books, but one night, while Muller was snoring below and we idled along, I found part of a book—a highly unusual book. In a little locker under the wheel, thrust carelessly under some old charts, were some folded sheets, stained and dog-eared, that appeared to be pages torn from a large book. I unfolded them carefully. Stamped at the top of each page was the notation *U.S.S. Nelson*.

They were thick, parchment-like paper, obviously pages torn from an official naval log-book—the sort of thing that definitely doesn't belong in civilian hands. I read the pages of carefully written words, and right away a lot of things began to make sense to me.

The pages started with a significant

date—December 7, 1941. Written in terse language in indelible ink, the pages told a story of guts and bad breaks that came alive, even though a lot of it was ancient history.

The *Nelson* was cruising off Singapore when Pearl Harbor had been attacked. She'd gotten orders to rendezvous with a British cutter and take off the governor of Singapore, and with him the official documents and funds. This they did. They'd run for three days down the Java Sea, dodging Japs, but on the eleventh they'd taken a torpedo amidships and the gallant old *Nelson* went down, with six hands in the ship's gig left to carry on. The governor, his box of official documents and funds, a lieutenant, a couple of gobs named Joe—and a chief boatswain named Muller.

The log ended abruptly on date of December 16, 1941, with the simple notation, "Very little water left. Governor dead—" It gave latitude and longitude readings a scant two hundred miles from where the *Bluefin* bucked along under a black and moonless sky.

I had a lot to think about that night. What had happened aboard that little gig, with six men under a pitiless sun, the water running out and no hope of salvation? One thing was certain, one man had survived. The remnants of the log was proof of that. One man—and that man's name had to be Muller.

The *Bluefin* worked along the coast of Java, stopping every time we hit one of the innumerable atolls that pin-point the sea, and Muller would consult an excellent naval chart. Usually he'd grunt and squint off toward the line of dark coral that marked the reef, where the birds soared and dipped while the ocean rose and creamed in thunderous spray, then glided over the reef and into a smooth emerald lagoon. They're all alike, these infinitesimal dots of sand and rock. Barren, for the most part, waterless, each lovely with its tiny lagoon, its eternal booming surf outside the reef—it's unending loneliness.

"Nope," Muller would say, taking a bearing and squinting down at the chart. "Not that one." I'd look at him, wondering how he was so certain that particular bit of sand wasn't what he was after. And anyway, to a geologist, one atoll was as good as the next. Most of them were the tips of mountains, long buried beneath the sea.

It would take a man with an incredible amount of knowledge to know just why any one of these nameless uncharted spits of land was any

different from another—unless he'd already been there and marked it off himself. I remembered that the *Nelson* had gone down over a dozen years ago. A man could do a lot of exploring in a dozen years—taking time out for the war and typhoon seasons, to boot.

After three weeks of this had passed, I decided to call Muller's little bluff. Over a lousy chow of fried fish and soggy potatoes, I said, "What's your opinion of the San Andreas fault? Think it'll act up again?"

"San Andreas fault?" He stared stupidly at me, and suddenly his sunburnt face turned even darker red. "Oh—you mean—the San Andreas fault?"

I laughed and lit a cigarette. "Let's put it this way," I said. "What's the chances on finding the governor's box before you die of old age?"

He was out of his seat, his thick hands reaching for me before I finished the sentence. But the three weeks at sea—and the regular meals—bad as they were, had fixed me fine. I held his hands an inch away from my throat and squeezed. His purple face remained motionless inches from mine for long seconds. His little shark's eyes glittered at me, and suddenly he flopped back in his chair.

"I found the pages from the log," I told him coolly. "The U.S. Navy would be interested to know you have them—chief."

HE jerked again and his eyes slid past me to where the old .45 hung on the wall—a G.I. issue, now that I thought of it.

"Got it all figured out, haven't you?" he muttered. "But remember this, you're hired on to dive—and nothing else."

"Those few pages changed the whole deal," I told him. "It's a federal rap to hold them out, Muller. I've come this far—I'm willing to play it out to the end. Why not level with me?"

He scowled at me from under heavy brows, still not speaking. I shrugged. "I know this much," I said slowly, "You and the governor and several others got off the *Nelson*. Six of you in a gig. As I recall, those old gigs were pretty well set-up. Had a brass-covered cockpit fore and aft. Plenty of shade. If you made it—no reason why the others didn't."

His eyes slid to the .45 and he grinned faintly. I felt my back prickle in spite of the heat. Bos'n's were equipped with a sidearm, I recalled. It wasn't hard to figure what had happened to the other four left after the governor had died.

"There wasn't enough water to go around," he said abruptly, his voice a low growl above the subdued mutter

of the *Bluefin*'s idling diesel. "So—the others just died. I was lucky. I didn't die." He poured himself a slug of rum and I watched him. He looked to be in the mood to talk. I kept quiet and waited.

"I had a rough idea where I was," he said. "We'd been drifting for nearly a week when—when the others died. We had to be somewhere off Sumbawa—"

"We're just below Sumbawa now."

He drummed on the table, frowning. "I ran into bad luck after that. I was afraid of planes—Japs. I knew I'd have to ditch the gig and the—" He shot me a swift glance, then took a swallow of rum. "When I drifted near one of these damned atolls, I decided to take the chance and beach the gig, using the oars." His big hands knotted and he dragged angrily at his cigarette. "I made my big mistake then. Instead of heading around looking for a channel, I tried to ride her over the reef and into the lagoon." He stopped, staring moodily into space.

"Ripped the bottom out of her-right?" I filled in. He nodded.

"She sank like a stone, just over the reef in the quiet water. Damn near chopped me to pieces on the reef. I got to the beach somehow. No water. Fever. Now get this—" He leaned forward, eyes burning. "The next thing I knew—I woke up in Darwin—fourteen days later!"

"Darwin!" I stared at him, seeing the frustrated anger in his face. "But—Australia! Twelve hundred miles, at least!"

"Near as I could learn," he muttered, "some natives picked me up and took me on to another island—what direction, how far, I don't know. Some Dutch freighter took me off and went on to Timor. Transferred me to a British cruiser and they took me to Darwin. Damn near died from fever. When I was back on my feet, I learned the cruiser was sunk and no one knew anything of a Dutch freighter."

"How did you manage to hang onto those log-sheets?" I asked.

He shrugged irritably. "Sewed in my money belt. Figured they'd come in handy after the war." He shot me a slit-eyed glance. "Thought I'd dropped them over the side years ago—fat lot of good they've done me." He gave a short bitter bark. "Four years I sweat out the war. Three more I scrounge until I get this tub—and six years—six years—" He slapped the Dutch sea-chart savagely. "Do you know how many atolls are shown on this map?"

"Too many," I said. "And plenty more that aren't shown."

"Six years," he croaked, one blunt finger digging into the vast expanse

of blue on the map. "Six lousy years and still no luck."

"What was in it?" I said. "The governor's box, I mean."

"You know so damned much," he snarled. "You tell me."

"Funds," I said calmly. "British sterling. Bank of England notes in very large denomination, most likely." I cocked an eye at him. He stared at me as if I were the devil in disguise. "The log-sheets," I reminded him. "The governor would be likely to have large sums—maybe in the millions." I folded my arms. "Worth killing four men for—eh, Muller?"

He spat and looked sullenly away and I studied his gross over-weight body. "Why pick on me?" I asked. "Can't you do the diving? Why the phony story?"

"Can't dive any more," he growled. "Six years of it—my ticker." He swung and his smile was as phony as his story about geology. "I figured on telling you about the whole deal once we got out here. Couldn't take a chance on anyone in Saigon hearing—" He stopped significantly.

I nodded. "How much?"

"Over five million," he whispered. "Cold cash."

"Probably rotted to hell by now," I muttered. He shook his head violently.

"That box was waterproof, mister. Really waterproof."

"My share?"

"A third," he said slowly. "After all—it's my boat." He shot a quick glance over to the wall where the .45 hung and I smiled to myself.

"Make me a partner," I said. "Share and share alike—in everything."

He looked at me a long time and then his eyes flickered. "It's a deal," he said. He poured two big shots. "Let's drink to it, partner."

"Sure—after you put it in writing," I said.

After that, we settled down to some serious searching. Muller had a beautiful Dutch chart of these waters, and he'd carefully worked out all the probables.

"The way I work it," he explained, "I start with the idea that the Dutch freighters don't stop at every island. I've charted every freighter stop and figured that the natives wouldn't have paddled over thirty miles or so to bring in a white." He showed the dark circles that he'd drawn over the years. There were plenty of them. "I searched all the atolls within thirty miles of these Dutch port of calls." No wonder the guy had a bum heart. The map looked like a bad case of smallpox.

"It ain't a picnic," he said grimly, jerking a thumb at the spear-guns in the rack. "You'd be surprised at what gets into those lagoons—and can't get out."

"Anything but surprised," I said.

We had a simple plan for when we hit the first probable. The *Bluefin* would drop anchor on the seaward side of the reef if there was no channel or too narrow a one, and we'd slip over in the launch. I'd go down in a sling and Muller would cruise along the reef while I dangled, looking for the gig—like a big piece of bait on a hook.

"There's one thing in our favor," Muller said somberly. "I remember, when I was taking the gig over the reef, that there was a fairly good little peak on this atoll shaped just like an ice-cream cone." He licked his lips. "Chocolate ice cream . . ."

We saw it the next day—only it wasn't the right flavor. A perfect little scoop of earth and rock, looking good enough to eat. We found a narrow channel and slipped the launch through with the surf sliding and roaring against the reef on either side. I went down in a bos'n's seat and Muller cruised the launch along the inward side of the reef. Down there, in the quiet cool green, with the crazy-quilt patchwork of brilliance flashing dizzily under the slanting sunrays, it wasn't hard to imagine that every rocky outcropping, every gaudy lump of coral was the gig. But

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closer examination showed nothing. We covered the entire mile or so of inner reef in a few hours, up-anchored and bore off, Muller in a sullen silence.

The days went into weeks, and it seemed that every third or fourth atoll we ran across had a miniature mountain, like an ice-cream cone. My body was beginning to crack and the salt sores became an intolerable torment. Twice I'd narrowly missed being killed by enormous morays. Muller began hitting the rum, and once, he forgot the air-pump on the launch and the one-lunger died. So did I—nearly. After that, I took to going down with swim-fins, a portable oxygen mask and the spear-gun. I was really earning that money—if ever we found it.

I FOUND it. We'd been out a little over a month. It was a hot still day, with the sea rolling like liquid glass under the old *Bluefin* when we saw the first tip rising out of the sea. Muller stared at it with glazed eyes that slowly showed sharp recognition. There was a good-sized channel through the high barrier reef, and we cautiously edged the *Bluefin* in, past the razor-edged coral, where the great birds dipped and wheeled and dived into the spray to come up with silvery wriggling fish.

"Look at it," he muttered, staring at the brown peak that dominated the atoll. Even from close up the bare pure volcanic rock resembled an enormous mound of chocolate, melting slowly under the tropic sun. We bore to starboard and the *Bluefin* slid quietly into the pale green shallow lagoon that was maybe two miles in circumference. A low line of rock ran from the peak down to where the still water lapped at the beach, a good mile away.

The chain sent ringing echoes chasing about the little lagoon as the hook rattled down. I had a feeling of finality, an inner sense of certainty telling me that here, if anywhere, the gig might be, cradling its box of British currency, sheltered beneath quiet waters for a dozen years.

I decided to wait until the turn of the tide, before I went down. An outgoing—toward the deep water, had a tendency to keep the morays and other killers in their holes. And besides, the water near where the sandy bottom rose to meet the first coral cliffs would be less turbulent on an out-going. While we waited, I made sure the spear-gun was working, had a bite to eat and some coffee. Muller had rum. Lots of it.

But drunk or sober, he could handle the *Bluefin*. We started on a slow cruise just before noon. We used the bos'n's chair again, with a port-

able helmet. I wore the swim-fins and a belt of lead weights.

The hours passed, and still only the usual out-croppings, the great sprawling masses of coral, the endless swarms of fish, scintillating like great handfuls of gems, flashing and turning in the reflected light. And suddenly passing slowly below, no more than a fathom, I saw the outlines of a formation that was too perfect, too smooth and regular, tapering from a broad stern to a narrow bow. Automatically I jerked hard on the rope and immediately I felt the beat of the *Bluefin's* screw cease. A moment later the hook slid down before me, sending up a slow curtain of ooze as it buried in the bottom. Full of rum or not, Muller was on the ball.

I sat there for long minutes, feeling the steady draft from the *Bluefin's* air-pump, thinking furiously, peering back and down at the long dark shadow on the bottom. It had to be the gig. It was about the right dimensions. Even though the years had covered the outlines with the prolific growths of the sea, still it was unmistakably artificial. The gig had been solidly made, of good oak. Metal would have disintegrated by now. The canopies would have resisted corrosion too, being made of brass.

Why had Muller picked on me? For that matter, why hadn't the story of the governor's box leaked throughout the South Seas? Surely Muller, through his years of searching, must have had helpers the same at I.

They're a suspicious hard-drinking lot, given to talking. Why hadn't they spilled the secret? The answer whispered in my ears with the cool air from above. They hadn't lived, when the *Bluefin* was through for the season, to tell Muller's secret. He killed as a matter of course, and did what he had to do during the typhoon season, preparing for the next year and another try—with a new man.

I shrugged, took a deep breath of the piped air, then dropped from under the helmet and pumped back toward the sunken outline. Sooner or later the showdown would have to come, but even so, I cursed myself for being too hasty in jerking in that rope.

IT was the gig. It lay on the first swelling rise of the coral reef, wedged tightly between a gorgeous sunburst of brain coral and a razor-edged, treelike branch coral. So perfectly had its bottom been torn away that it was neatly upright. It appeared to be still in motion, riding the jagged bottom, with the long graceful strands of seaweed trailing back from it, like fluttering pennants swinging in the tide rip.

I swam toward it, my diaphragm already beginning to jerk like a vibrating drum. I didn't like the dark hidden hole under the gig's double canopy. It was big and dark and roomy. An ideal spot for giant morays—or worse—to lurk. I touched the barnacle-encrusted rail and slowly swam up toward the stern.

Then suddenly I knew that for all the pounds sterling in the world, no one in his right mind would go near that treasure. I backed hastily, dropped my weights and shot for the surface, my belly jerking for air.

HE was waiting for me, leaning over the rail, his little eyes like chips of frozen ocean, watching me as I surfaced.

I treaded water, not speaking, sucking in air, and he looked at me—hard. Then he grinned, a slow satisfied smirk.

"You found it." It was a statement of fact, not a question.

"It's there," I said. "Just like you left it."

"How's her position?" he said thickly, and I could see that he was full of rum—celebrating, just in case. I treaded water and waited for him to drop the rope ladder—the rope ladder that should have been hanging over the side but wasn't.

"Perfect," I said. I shot a quick glance around. The lagoon was a smooth swell of emerald emptiness. I know now how the proverbial fish in the barrel must feel. I pumped water easily with the big swim fins buoying me up and slowly I brought the spear-gun to bear on him. He saw the movement and his lips split like a shark about to strike.

"It's no good," I told him, but he'd ducked out of sight. A moment later the rope ladder plopped alongside the hull.

I pulled myself up, hand over hand, the awkward swim fins making it hard to use the rungs. The spear-gun didn't help any, either, but I hung onto that with a hard grip. I dropped over the side just as he emerged from the cabin, smiling waxily, his eyes red and full of danger. He finished buckling on the .45.

"What's no good?" he said. "It's down there ain't it?" He shifted onto the balls of his feet. He was in trunks, the scabby old holster dangling against one thick hairy thigh. The big .45 looked like a squirt gun against his bulk.

"You'll never get it out of there," I told him, watching the gun, but he was fast—and the swim fins tangled me up somewhat.

"You mean you'll never get it!" he roared, one meaty hand slapping for the gun. I stepped back, crouched and pulled the trigger on the spring-

gun. The deadly spear flew toward him, but the fins threw me off. The spear bit into the bulkhead, twanging against his head, not hard, but enough to spoil his snap shot. The old .45 roared once, sending echoes crashing about the lagoon, scaring hell out of a flock of gulls, but scaring me worse. One shot was all he got. I closed with him, slipping my hands along his hairy sweating body, trying to get a good hold. It was like trying to catch a greased pig. And again the swim-fins ruined me.

"You damned idiot!" I yelled, while he twisted and roared like a berserk bull elephant. "Listen to me!" I got a grip on his hair, snapped his head back and slipped a forearm under his head. The vertebrae in his neck cracked. I reached around, got the gun and with a quick toss sent it spinning over the side.

He broke the hold by simply falling back on me and we both crashed to the deck. He bounced up like an india-rubber man, screaming like a maniac, tore open the door of the cabin and was inside with one long stride. He grabbed the rifle from the rack, and I knew instantly there was only one thing to do. I turned and dove over the side and went down, deep. Then I headed toward the shore, a good mile away, kicking strongly, thankful, at last, for the swim-fins.

I surfaced about fifty yards away to get back the breath I'd lost and he was waiting. The bullet skipped inches away, the echo of the rifle-shot whanging and booming about the peak and I went under again, but fast. I surfaced only when the blood was roaring and pounding in my head, but this time, he was late spotting me. I porpoised under before any shot or sound of one reached me. It took three long underwater spurts before I felt far enough away to strike out for the low overhanging tip of rock that slipped down to the water's quiet edge.

If he wanted to drop the launch and come after me, well and good. He'd play hell catching me, and the quick tropic night was only a couple of hours off. I still had my knife—and he was full of rum with a bum heart, to boot. But knowing Muller, I had a strong hunch how he'd play the game. And since there was no help for it, I'd give the murdering scum his chance to play it—to the finish.

I swam steadily. Turning once, I caught the glint of glasses. He was watching, making certain I'd head for land and not circle. I smiled grimly. When I got to the low tip of volcanic rock, I threw myself up and turned, making certain he couldn't help spotting me. I wasn't

afraid he'd try to pick me off—the man couldn't do it, not at that distance. And anyway, I wanted him to see me. Then I sat down and I waited.

After a little while I heard the faint sounds as he swung the *Bluefin's* stern boom out and over the spot I'd surfaced. I could make out the outlines of the boom, a thin pencil mark against the descending sun. It wasn't hard to figure what he planned to do. Lower the cable, give it plenty of slack, then dive down to the sunken gig, secure the box and surface again. Then, rev the power winch, and easy as pie, up would come the governor's box, with all that millions in British pounds sterling. He could be far out beyond the reef before I could even swim halfway back, now.

The whole operation should take only a few minutes—a few minutes plus six years, plus five or more dead men, and one man watching from a waterless atoll, lost in the Java sea, left stranded with fortune in plain sight. It must have been a big moment for the pot-bellied rummy.

But I wished him luck as I heard the sound of the boom rattling across the gentle swells of the lagoon. He was drunk on dreams and lousy rum. He should have listened before trying to kill me. I almost saw the splash as he went over for the payoff dive . . .

I waited. The fiery sun dipped lower. The long minutes passed and still the boom remained motionless. I waited. The tide was rising slowly, the peak behind me threw a great purple shadow across a darkening blue sea, and finally, stiff, the salt-sores stinging like acid burns, I slipped into the lagoon and headed back for the old *Bluefin*.

I made the swim and climbed

aboard the *Bluefin* as the sun was hovering over the horizon. I brought up the cable and it came easily. It was empty, as I knew it would be. I swung in the boom, secured it, raised anchor and turned the *Bluefin* about without another look down into the green water. The governor's box could stay there forever, cradled in the depths of the gig, for all I cared. I had the *Bluefin*, and the papers to prove it. A good sturdy boat and all the South Pacific to roam in was treasure enough for me.

As for Muller. If he hadn't been so greedy, if he'd given me a few minutes more before making his play, he'd have learned why I'd said it was no good. He'd have known what I saw as I swam cautiously along the rail of the sunken gig: Part of the deck had suddenly come alive and a giant tentacle, at least twelve feet long and thick as my body at the chest, had snaked toward me. Then it was hastily withdrawn, as though the creature was aware it had acted too soon. And dimly, in the dark depths of the gig's hold, I'd seen the saucer-sized eyes of an enormous octopus. He'd given himself away—and I'd gotten out of there.

An octopus is smart. Ask anyone who's ever made a study of them. I'm quite certain that when Muller went down, his mind afire with rum and greed, the octopus waited, holding his deadly embrace until Muller was well within his grasp. So Muller got his governor's box at last, and it's his for all eternity.

In the instant before the sun dropped over the rim of the world, I slid the *Bluefin* through the channel and without looking back to where the dark peak loomed up, I headed her for the deep blue water beyond. •



*"I don't know how you got in here, Mr. O'Shea,
but you'll have to submerge while the ladies leave."*

FACT THAT RIVALS FICTION

The Guy Who Went For the Ride



If you think you've read all the war stories, and Navy snafus has no more surprises for you, read this one through to the end.

We guarantee the finale will give you a jolt.

By ROBERT KEITH LEAVITT

This, I warn you, is a story with a twist. Which is the only excuse, these days, for telling another of those Navy yarns.

You know the kind. Men who were there tell them afterward, when it is safe to do so, for the laughs. Or for the shivers, as the case may be.

There is no laugh in this one. It concerns an experimental ship and a man who saved that ship from going down with all hands, on her maiden voyage, in a great storm at sea. But there are two other facts that make the story: The man didn't belong aboard the ship—he was just along for the ride. And the stakes he played for, in a night-long gamble with death, turned out to be so big that it is breathtaking, now, to think, "What if he had failed?"

Those facts, along with the others, are authentic. They are amply documented, deep down in the Navy Department's files. But they are known to only a few people outside the Navy.

The ship, then, was a wartime, experimental craft. One of those special-purpose, rush-job buckets that invariably turn out to be full of engineering and mechanical defects born of haste and untried design.

She was even more special, though, than most. The Navy, learning that the enemy was perfecting a new weapon, had to develop a type of ship to meet it. Money was no object; time was all-important. Seaworthiness was secondary; battle effectiveness had to be achieved at any cost. There was no experience to guide anyone; every promising idea had to be tried. So they called in engineers and inventors by the score. Out of all the plans proposed by these, they picked three, and hastily let contracts for them to three shipbuilding companies.

This particular ship was the weirdest of the lot. She was an inventor's dream, a contractor's nightmare—and a sailor's wide-awake fright. She was the brain-child of a brilliant naval engineer who had done a lot of work, off and on, on combat ships, weapons and engines—some of it successful, some disappointing, all radically original. On this design he had gone to town. The ship was to be full of advanced-type engines, gadgets, machinery and guns. In fact, nearly everything in her was a new invention, and most of her equipment had to be especially made for the job.

On this account, as well as to make time in construction, there would be even more than the usual amount of sub-contracting. Nearly every part of the craft had to come in to the shipyard from somewhere else. It was the well-known wartime speed procedure, with extra complications because practically none of the parts or equipment was a standard product.

So they picked with extra care the officer to oversee the job of construction. His name was Stimers. Alban C. Stimers.

Stimers was then 35 years old, a tall, handsome man with a mustache, a balding forehead, a pair of bright, round, piercing eyes and a genially positive way about him. He was a Regular Navy officer, though not one of the Annapolis or "Trade School" boys. He had entered the service from civilian life midway of the long, peacetime years. He had come up the ladder of promotion by way of arduous sea duty in the engine rooms of every kind of craft from a picket boat to a capital ship, and on both the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. In the course of this bouncing-around, he had earned himself a modest Navy reputation as a good engineer, an energetic leader of men, a progressive thinker and a more-than-ordinarily resourceful trouble-shooter. So, shortly after the war broke, he was ordered ashore as a Brain, to oversee ship construction in the New York area.

If it had been peace-time, this would have pleased him. He had a home on Staten Island, with a wife he adored, and a growing family of children whom he was glad to see something of, at last. But, on the other hand, it gripped him to be stuck on the beach, after thirteen years as a Naval officer, just when there was a war on.

It was small consolation to him that the very first job he was assigned to was this one, so important and so urgently needed for a forthcoming operation that the Secretary of the Navy, himself, was keeping the wires hot to know about its progress. Quite a feather for a mere three-striper to be working practically under the eye of SECNAV. But still, Stimers wished he could get back to sea.

Very shortly, though, this and everything else got driven out of his head by the perplexity of his job. It was like trying to fit together a picture puzzle, of which each piece had been made by a different jig-saw artist with individual notions. It seemed that practically none of the sub-contracted parts, when they arrived, would fit with any of the others. Or they wouldn't work when fitted. Every day, "bugs" (as engineering men call the defects they have to iron out) showed up by the bushel. The shipyard was full of grief, profanity, sweat and consternation.

Stimers couldn't stand merely watching this. So, one day, early in the proceedings, he flung aside his gold-braided cap, shed his gold-striped coat and got into a machine-shop assembly job. The next day it happened again, on some pipe-fitting.

After that he was up to his elbows all day long in chips, red lead and oil-fitting, adjusting, testing, running-in one piece of equipment after another.

The more he did this, the more he came to understand the strange ship, and to believe that, just on account of her weirdness she could do the job that was going to be asked of her. He got hopped on her, and spent his evenings and weekends prowling through her maze of machinery, trying out every valve and compressor and pump and gun-pointing mechanism with his own hands.

He could do this because she wasn't a very large ship. She was only about the length of the familiar PC class of sub-chasers, though broader and heavier. And to meet her special technical purposes, she had a low freeboard and an outlandish silhouette.

Her unorthodox design, in fact, gave Stimers' deck-officer friends the willies just to look at her, and the shudders to think of going to sea in her. If she met big seas, they said, she couldn't ride up and over them; she would just burrow into them. Which would be too bad if the seas started coming through the openings in the deck and superstructure. To which Stimers, who knew every rivet in the ship, replied that all the doors and other openings topside could be made watertight, and that, while some water was bound to get in, there were pumps enough to put it right out again. To himself, though, he added, "if those pumps work the way they should." They were a little on the temperamental side.

He might as well have said it aloud. The Navy Department, getting ready to assign a crew to the new vessel as she neared completion, thought twice and decided against ordering anyone to duty on such a dangerous-looking bucket. Instead, they called for volunteers. And got them, of course, several times over, which not only proved that Americans will take a chance on anything to get to sea in wartime, but allowed the Navy to have its pick among some of the hardest-case, most experienced officers, petty officers and gobs in the Naval service.

MEANWHILE, they had been putting the heat on Stimers to get the ship out, because time was on the run and the operation they needed her for was coming up. So Stimers infused that heat into the contractors and their men (as he worked alongside them) so fast that they got the vessel out of the yard within seventeen weeks of her keel-laying. Which is nice going for anything but a prefabricated ship.

But as Stimers knew all too well, "out" and "finished" are two different things. And the weird ship forthwith proved this, right up to the hilt. On

her first trial trip, practically everything went wrong: engines, blowers, gun-training mechanism. Even the steering-gear went haywire . . . Stimers knew those things were the natural result of untried design, hasty construction and imperfect adjustment, but the Navy Department had some hard words to say. The contractors took the ship back, and, with Stimers working like a demon among their overtime mechanics, had her ready for a final trial in thirteen more days.

This time she didn't break down. But her performance was still short of contract specifications. No matter. The Navy had to have her if she could get to sea under any conditions. The calendar was pressing, and unless she could leave within the next two days she wouldn't get to her destined port in time to take part in the operation she had been built for. So they accepted her "as is." And so glad to get her that SECNAV himself took back his earlier, impatient words and commended everybody concerned, including Stimers, for getting her operational at all. Over the same wire came orders for the bucket to get going on the next day but one.

Now Stimers' job was officially finished. He could wash up, put on his brass hat again and maybe get a spot of leave with his family before the next inspection-and-overseeing job came along. But he had other ideas. Or rather, one obsessing and compelling idea.

When, on those trial trips, he had seen the ship's new crew wrestling with unfamiliar machinery, he realized it was all too true, what the deck-officers had said. If that craft had the bad luck to run into a really heavy blow at sea, before her crew had got the hang of making her temperamental machinery work under unfavorable conditions, then it would be just too bad. A lot of water would certainly come aboard. And if those doubtful pumps should balk . . . Or if the cranky steering-gear should get out of hand . . . Or if any one of dozens of other things should go wrong, with nobody on the spot that knew how to fix it, that could very well mean a progressively-faster losing battle against the sea, culminating in a cold plunge to death for the ship, for her crew—and for her vital combat mission.

So Stimers wired for permission to go along—as a passenger and observer. He couldn't go as one of the ship's officers; Navy red tape barred that. Yet he couldn't stay behind. He was, as he knew, and as later technical reports pointed out, literally the only man who thoroughly understood the operation and characteristics of the vessel. And he knew there had to

be somebody with that knowledge aboard. Or else.

He told himself he was going for a taste of action, which he would certainly get, for the forthcoming operation would be a heavy one, and the ship's new skipper was one of the fightin'est men in the Navy. He told the Navy Department he was going for technical purposes, to watch how the ship performed. And they were glad to have him do that, because a great deal depended on how this experimental model worked out when the chips were down in action. But he didn't tell anybody what was really eating at the back of his mind.

So, next day, when the cranky, little, new bucket stuck her nose out into the Atlantic, in company with a small convoy, Alban C. Stimers was aboard. For the ride.

THE weather was with them the first part of the way, and they thanked their lucky stars for that. For they found, among other things, that workmen under orders from some officious "experts" at the Navy Yard had at the last minute so successfully fouled up certain moving parts and supposedly watertight joints above decks that if heavy waves should come aboard, she would take in ten times as much water as the worst they had previously feared.

Then, toward sunset of the last day out from their destination, the weather thickened and the wind rose, swiftly, ominously. By nightfall it was blowing a gale, the seas were running higher every minute, the convoy got scattered, and its ships lost touch with one another.

And, as the black March night closed in, the little craft, pitching and wallowing in the wind and the mountainous waves, was, as the official reports later put it, "in great peril."

Peril enough if everything went right. It was the kind of storm that even big ships don't like. The kind in which a small ship can only hang on, fighting to make the best of it and praying that nothing will give way.

But aboard this experimental ship things very soon began to give way. First of all, water started shooting in through the hawse pipes every time the ship plunged into a great sea. Then, the seas got bigger still, and solid water, crashing down onto her decks, washed out the temporary plugs and gaskets on the joints which the Navy Yard experts had fouled up. Instantly, seawater began pouring into the ship from overhead in a young Niagara.

Stimers knew, or hoped, anyway, that the pumps could handle even this—as long as they would work. So he joined the engine-room crew to

make sure they did. But presently, as the storm mounted and the waves grew and the ship's plunges got steeper and more violent, water coming over the top poured right down the air intakes, directly into the engine room.

Now all this water, cascading in from all sides and sloshing up from the deck, as the craft pitched, began to cut the power that drove the pumps. And so the water began to gain. Stimers, who had been watching the pumps like a doctor at the bedside of a struggling patient, turned to this new peril, kneeling in greasy water that splashed every minute higher around him and the engine-room crew as they worked at his side. They had to do a lot of this adjusting by sense of touch, so it was a good thing Stimers was there. He could tell every valve handle aboard by feel, in the dark or under water. And presently this intimate knowledge paid off. The power began to pick up again.

But, by this time, the water was so high the ventilating air-blowers got wet and started to fail. So the engine room began to fill up with carbon monoxide and other gases from the engines. To make matters worse, the rising gale outside started blowing exhaust gases right back down the stack. Presently, men began passing out.

Stimers had the first of them carried up and into the open air on the topmost deck; no one could get outside, much less live, on a lower deck. Then, as more men keeled over, he sent the whole engine-room crew up there and remained below himself, alone, trying to keep the engines running and the pumps working and—between times—to get those blowers working again.

BUT pretty soon he found not only that he wasn't making any progress, but that he was growing confused in the head and weak in the knees. When carbon monoxide begins to get to a man, he feels an almost irresistible temptation to lie down and go to sleep. Which for Stimers alone down there would have meant quick death, followed swiftly by the death of the ship and everybody aboard her. And the end of her mission, on which depended the success of a decisive action and possibly the whole course of the war.

The realization of this drove him, fighting for consciousness, to the ladder leading above, and lent him, out of some last reserve of courage, enough strength to gain the topmost level. Here he dropped unconscious, just close enough to the door to be dragged outside by the men on deck.

They thought he was dead, and left him while those who had recovered

went back into the gas-filled engine room, to keep the power going as long as it would stand between them and the bottom of the sea. And to try and start the blowers.

But, in the open air, Stimers recovered all by himself. He must have been practically unkillable that night; some of the others were laid out for days afterward. But he was on his feet before anybody noticed, and climbing down the ladder again to rejoin those who had gone back to the engine room.

He got there just as they were beginning to pass out for the second time. And as he was in the act of ordering them topside again, the pumps failed. Now it seemed as though the ship, with all hands, certainly was doomed. They expected the final plunge at any moment.

But just then there came a brief lull in the storm. The wind let up temporarily, and the seas went down. Often, that happens at the center of a whirling gale; there is a brief respite before the other half of the revolving storm comes along and strikes.

This gave them the break they so desperately needed. Working frantically against time and tempest, they got things adjusted in the engine room, and the pumps and blowers started once more.

But, shortly after midnight, the other half of the storm hit. And things got worse than before. The pumps and blowers started to go out again, in spite of all that Stimers and the ship's despairing crew could accomplish, sloshing on heaving metal decks with death in the form of greasy water clutching at their knees.

Then the steering-gear went out of commission, and the bucket began to yaw every which way in the mountainous, tumbling seas. Other vessels in the convoy lost sight of her and two of them reported she had sunk.

As the craft plunged helplessly, some freak of the storm began driving air and water up through the hawse pipes with a noise like "the death groan of twenty men," as one of the boys wrote his mother afterward, "the most dismal, awful sound I ever heard."

They thought, in truth, that it was the herald of the ship's doom and their own. They did not see how there could be any hope left now. But still, under the leadership of Stimers, they kept the engines running after a fashion, and the pumps working feebly, and the blowers going by fits and starts, so that they could go back in relays for a few minutes at a time.

Then the storm let up, as suddenly as it had come. And morning dawned. They got things running again, and put the ship under way.

Now they were approaching their destination, the rendezvous with the fleet their experimental vessel had been sent to join in the operation that would prove whether she was any good for the key-critical, special purpose for which she was designed and built. They would have about twenty-four hours to get their ship working efficiently and make her ready for the decisive combat.

And they did, Stimers again leading and directing everything. For, remember, he was the only man aboard who really understood the working of every part of the ship.

As a result, when the battered little bucket went into the show next day, she was ready, though hardly a man aboard had closed an eye in sleep for more than forty-eight hours. She was there, and she was ready.

But she wouldn't have been there at all—much less ready—if Alban C. Stimers hadn't gone along for the ride.

After that, the operation itself must have seemed to them like child's play. True, it was considerable of an action. The ship was hit twenty-two

times, and there were several casualties among her crew. One of these was the Warrant Officer operating her gun-pointing machinery. Stimers took over from him. Another was the skipper, blinded by a shell-burst. Stimers took over as gunnery officer from the man who stepped into the skipper's shoes. Once he was knocked down by the effects of a hit. But, even so, it must have seemed a breeze to him after those awful hours in the night and storm at sea, when he had led the fight to keep the weird little ship topside of the water.

And yet—and yet—the job that bucket did that day was really quite a job.

It got cheered by all the bigger ships in the fleet. It got officially noticed in Navy Department orders, and commended by the President. It got in the papers. It got in the history books.

In fact, you have read about that ship.

Her name was the *Monitor*, and on March 9, 1862, she stopped the Confederate ram *Merrimac* on the waters of Hampton Roads. •



SQUEEZE PLAY



Asking a girl if she wears something as intimate as Snuggies isn't exactly the best way to strike up an acquaintance. But neither is getting hit with a baseball bat.

By FREDERIC SINCLAIR

Illustration by
ROBERT GREENHALGH



Robert Greenhalgh

I parked the company station wagon in front of the FERNDALE DRESS & LINGERIE SHOPPE, grabbed my brief case, hustled across the sun-splashed sidewalk, ducked under the store's striped awning and barged into the air-conditioned gloom of the woman's store. And there she was. All golden, green and brown in up-swept hair, sweater and slacks. I didn't notice the baseball bat until it was too late.

She swung the bat.

I hollered, "Hey!"

The bat was suddenly as big as a telegraph pole, and abruptly I had no breath and found myself sitting on the linoleum floor of the FERNDALE DRESS & LINGERIE SHOPPE. I felt very bad.

I groped around, found my breath, and somehow got my inhaling apparatus in motion again. Up above, the golden-haired girl was inspecting her baseball bat critically.

"Hurt the bat?" I asked.

"There's a nick in it," she said. "Must have hit your belt buckle."

"No," I said, "it was my spine."

She showed belated interest. "You all right?"

"Just ducky," I told her. "It isn't every day one gets belted for a home run."

"I pulled my swing," she said defensively. "You must be out of shape."

"I am now," I said. I got a knee under me and came up slowly.

A fidgety little man behind the nylon stocking counter said anxiously, "I hope you're all right, sir. She was demonstrating Joe DiMaggio's swing."

"Yoicks!" said the girl. "I'll be late for practice!" She collected some parcels, gave me a quick, appraising look, said, "I'm really very sorry." She smiled, and all of the breath went out of me again. Then she was gone, the bat over her shoulder.

I asked, "What's the bat for, to ward off leering men?"

The man behind the nylon counter laughed. "Miss Carson's captain of the Ferndale Championship Girl's Softball Team. She's on her way to the ball park for practice. Quite a girl."

"Indeed yes . . . Carson!" I exploded. "Terry Carson?"

"Why, yes," he said. "Miss Terry Carson."

"Tell me," I asked eagerly. "Does she wear a Snuggie?"

His jaw dropped. "Young man," he said thinly, "that's an impertinent question."

"Are you Mr. Hiram Graham, owner of the FERNDALE DRESS & LINGERIE SHOPPE?" I asked, and when he indicated he was, I shoved one of my business cards at him.

"I'm Sid Abbott," I told him, "special sales representative for the Snuggie Company, Inc. I'm here to find out if Miss Carson wears a Snuggie. You're the distributor for Snuggies in the Florida territory. You should know."

"I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Abbott, and I must say that Snuggies are one of our best selling items," he said. "But I don't understand why you should be interested in whether Miss Carson . . . hum . . . really now."

Patiently, I said, "Miss Carson is captain of the nationally famous Ferndale Championship Girl's Softball Team, is she not?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"Last year, she won recognition as the most outstanding girl baseball player in the south. She's had offers to play with top men's teams . . ."

"I know all that, but . . ."

"Mr. Graham, we of the Snuggie Company, Inc., have every reason to be interested in athletic women who wear Snuggies."

"Hmmmmmm," he said.

"We want a testimonial from Miss Carson that she plays baseball wearing a Snuggie," I told him. "We want to pay her for that testimonial."

Graham brightened. "Excuse me," he said. He went to the rear of the store where a couple of sales girls were working. He held a whispered conversation with each. Finally, he came back to the nylon stocking counter and me.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Abbott," he said. "The girls aren't sure. One thinks she does. One thinks she doesn't."

I picked up my brief case. "Where's this baseball diamond?" I asked. . . .

It was a nice little ball park. Green grass, brown dirt, white base bags, and ringed by stately palm trees. I parked the station wagon under a palm tree, walked around the grandstand and stood in the shade it cast. Out on the sun-packed diamond, the Ferndale Championship Girl's Softball Team, in slacks, sweaters and caps, was going through some snappy infield practice.

I spotted Terry Carson, even though she was wearing a peaked baseball cap over her golden hair. She held a couple of bats on her shoulder as she talked to two men. One was a thick blond guy wearing a sweat shirt and a crew haircut. The other was a character of about 70, all togged out in a faded baseball uniform. I strolled over.

Terry looked up as I approached. She took a cut at the air with the two bats and grinned as I stopped strolling. "Did you get your shopping done?" she asked.

"I never got around to it," I told her. "You took the wind out of me."

She laughed. The thick blond guy with the crewcut, who'd been giving me an up-and-down eye, demanded, "Who's this?"

"He's the one I told you about," she said. "The man I . . . hum . . . met in the dress shop."

He began to bray. Finally he said to me, "That'll teach a guy not to go busting into a women's store."

I said to the girl, "If you can turn him off or point him in another direction I'd like to talk with you." As her eyes narrowed slightly, I added quickly, "Business, that is."

"I leave all business discussions up to my manager," she said.

"Him?" I asked, jerking my head at Crewcut.

"No, him," she said, nodding at the old boy in the de-mothed baseball suit. "My uncle, Seth Carson."

I shook hands with Uncle Seth who looked at me from under his baseball cap with alert young eyes, and then I was getting a test-of-strength handshake from Crewcut, whom the girl had introduced as Wilbur something-or-other, coach and trainer of the Ferndale Championship Girl's Softball Team.

The girl said with business-like crispness, "Now then, Mr. Abbott, whatever you have to discuss you may do so in front of my manager and coach."

I shrugged. "Okay. You asked for it." I looked her straight in the eye. "Miss Carson, do you wear a Snuggie?"

Her eyes filled with stunned disbelief. It seemed that all breathing in our little group stopped. Sounds around us magnified. Out in the playing field, a ball smacking into a glove sounded like the crack of a carbine.

Wilbur demanded, "What'd he say?"

The girl was studying me with wondering eyes. "He asked me if I wore a Snuggie."

"That's what I thought he said," growled Wilbur. He doubled his big hands and started toward me.

I reached down, picked up a white ash Louisville Slugger from the bat line, took a short hold on it, and made a wicked cut with the bat just short of Wilbur's jutting chin. He stopped advancing.

The girl said quickly, "I've got to get some batting practice in!" She gave me a look reserved for wandering maniacs. "Come on, Wilbur. You pitch." Wilbur stood undecided, flexing muscles. I waved the bat with casual menace. He left.

Uncle Seth and I stood there watching as Wilbur began burning underhand pitches into the plate and Terry

began whacking them into deep center field, and I must admit that girl could lean into a ball. Uncle Seth tugged at my sleeve. "Come over in the shade," he said.

In the shade of the grandstand, Uncle Seth said, "That was the dangedest approach I ever see a scout make."

"I'm not a scout," I informed him, tucking the Louisville Slugger under my arm. "I work for the Snuggie Company, Inc." I gave him one of my cards. While he was studying it with a sort of slack-jawed incredulity I explained my reasons for being there. He kept shaking his head and muttering, "A corset salesman, by gawd!"

But he must have been listening because when I mentioned the Snuggie Company, Inc., would pay his niece a sizable sum if she'd sign a testimonial that she wore a Snuggie when playing with the Ferndale Championship Girl's Softball Team, he nodded his head.

"Why not?" he mused. "I picked up extra money signing testimonials when I played with the Browns back in 1912."

"You'll help me then?"

"Nope," he said. "My niece does as she danged pleases, mostly. As far as baseball's concerned, I'm the boss, because I've taught her how to field, pitch, run, slide, bat and throw. But she's her own boss where anything but baseball's concerned."

Wilbur came up with his jaw still out. I got the Louisville Slugger out from under my arm. He looked at me and he looked at the bat. He said to Uncle Seth, "I'm going to put the girls through some base running and sliding practice. I'll coach on third. You take second base, Gramps."

Uncle Seth's eyes blazed. "Dang-nab it, Wilbur. It'll be me that'll bounce a fungo stick off your noggin and not some underwear salesman like Abbott here if you don't quit calling me Gramps."

Wilbur transferred his hostile gaze to me. "Why don't you go back to the Ferndale Dress & Lingerie Shoppe. You don't belong in the combat area."

"Not until I get a testimonial from you, Wilbur, that you wear a Snuggie while coaching the Ferndale girl's team," I told him.

"So that's it!" he said. "You've got as much chance of getting a testimonial out of Terry as you have of getting a free pass to tomorrow's ball game."

"Wilbur," I told him, "trot along back with the girls. We men have important business."

When Wilbur left, Uncle Seth appraised the playing form of his niece out on the ball diamond. He lowered his voice. "You know, son. I

don't think she wears one of them thingamajigs."

"Uncle Seth," I told him, also studying the form of his niece, "she has absolutely no need for one!"

After Uncle Seth left to coach at second, I sat down in the first row of the grandstand, partly to watch the practice session and partly to try and figure some way of accomplishing this almost impossible mission to this date of sun, palm trees and lady baseball players.

It wasn't long after this that I noticed Terry was going to try her hand at base running. She took her batting stance at the plate. A little dark-haired girl on the pitcher's mound burned one in. Terry placed it between first and second for a clean single.

The next practice batter and runner, a nifty blonde, got up to the plate, and I could tell by Wilbur's signals to Terry on first that he'd instructed her to attempt to steal second on the first ball pitched.

The dark-haired girl pitcher cocked an eye at Terry on first, fingered the ball, and then delivered her underhand pitch to the waiting blonde batter. Terry took off for second, her spikes kicking up clods of dirt. The redheaded girl catching behind the plate whipped a beautiful peg down toward the center sack.

Terry hit the dirt in a nicely executed hook slide. Dust bloomed up, obscuring the sliding Terry, the girl covering second base, and Uncle Seth, coaching at the bag.

The dust cleared. Terry still lay on the ground. Uncle Seth was bending over her. Wilbur was pounding up from third. Terry's teammates began forming an anxious circle around second base. I got up and trotted out on the field.

When I reached second base, Uncle Seth was saying, "It's her leg. We've got to get her to Dr. Merriweather quick."

Terry raised her arms. "Help me up," she said, and whether she was talking to Wilbur or to me doesn't matter. We both bent forward eagerly. I had completely forgotten about the Louisville Slugger I was carrying under my arm. The bat bounced off Wilbur's crewcut.

Wilbur sat down with a blurred expression. His eyes fuzzed. I got my arms around Terry and her arms went up around my neck and then I was standing there holding her, marveling at the lightness of her and the sweet smell of her golden hair.

She said surprised like, "How'd you get here?"

"On Wilbur's sacrifice," I told her, and then I was striding toward the station wagon parked under the palm

tree, leaving Wilbur sitting on second base with a foggy look. . . .

Dr. Merriweather was a gray-haired, roundish man in horn-rimmed glasses who was apparently the town physician. I placed Terry with tenderness on a padded examining table in the doctor's office and then he shooed Uncle Seth and myself into the waiting room.

We'd only been sitting there a few minutes when the door of the porch slammed back and Wilbur barged in looking sore. I groped around for the Louisville Slugger and then remembered I'd left it in the station wagon. Wilbur's muscles were beginning to flex openly when the door of Dr. Merriweather's office opened and he motioned us in.

Uncle Seth and Wilbur hit the door together, wedging there for an instant. They parted to glower at each other and I breezed through ahead of them. Terry's eyes swam up at me. Right then and there I decided there were no greener pastures than Ferndale, Snuggie testimonial or not.

Dr. Merriweather was ripping off strips of adhesive tape from huge rolls. "It's nothing very serious," he said. "Just a strained muscle. I'll bind it with adhesive tape. If she takes it easy she should be able to play tomorrow."

Terry, Uncle Seth and Wilbur exchanged dismayed glances. "Not adhesive tape, doc!" said Uncle Seth. "You can't use adhesive tape!"

Wilbur blurted, "She's allergic to it!"

"I break out in bumps," said Terry. "I get chills. Wilbur taped my knee last month. I couldn't stand it. Once, he taped my wrist. I had to go home and go to bed. Right in the middle of a game!"

"Amazing!" marveled Dr. Merriweather. "Allergic to adhesive tape? My! My! Never heard of such an allergy."

Wilbur said, "Watch!" He picked up a strip of the adhesive tape and approached Terry. She tightened. He squeezed the adhesive tape on her wrist, held it there for a couple of seconds, peeled it off. Faint, reddish welts appeared on Terry's tanned skin.

The doctor said, "My word! Immediate reaction!" He put the adhesive tape away. "If I can't use adhesive tape then I guess she just can't play tomorrow. Without the proper support there's no telling what damage she might do to that hip."

A light bulb clicked on inside my skull. "Excuse me," I said to nobody in particular. I beat it out of the office, went through the waiting room, out the front door, across the porch, down the steps and along the sidewalk to where my station wagon was parked at the curb.

I rummaged around in the back seat where I carried my display stock, found the box I was looking for and started back up the sidewalk. Then I went back to the station wagon, reached into the front seat, retrieved the Louisville Slugger and re-entered the doctor's house.

As I walked back into the office, Doctor Merriweather was saying, "You'll have to take it easy, Terry. Put heat on it. Come back and see me tomorrow." He was looking curiously at a red mark on her arm.

I said, "Snuggie to the rescue!"

Wilbur gritted, "Abbott, stay out of this!" He started after me with that ugly look of his, not seeing the bat.

I unlimbered the Louisville Slugger. "Stay put, coach," I told him. He stayed put, respect for the bat creeping into his eyes. I transferred my gaze to Dr. Merriweather and gave him the box. "Doctor, will you inspect the contents of this box and from a medical viewpoint tell us whether

"You listen to me!" snapped Uncle Seth. "You're your own boss where things other than baseball are concerned. But when it comes to playing baseball, I'm the boss! You want to play in tomorrow's game?"

"Yes, sir!" said Terry.

"Then get out in the back room and put that whatchacallit on and don't give me any more back-talk, young lady. That's a managerial order!"

"Yes, Uncle Seth," she said meekly. She limped out of the office. The door slammed behind her. We waited silently. Wilbur began breathing hard again. I cocked the bat. His breathing quieted.

The door opened. Terry walked into the office without a trace of a limp. "I feel as though I'd been caught in a vice!" Her eyes were happy, though, and when she looked at me there was an understanding there which hadn't been noticeable before.

Uncle Seth clapped me on the back.

"The testimonial," I said. "Let's not forget the testimonial."

Uncle Seth handed me a pasteboard. "There's a special pass to tomorrow's ball game. See us after we've won, eh, Terry?"

"Yes, Uncle Seth," she said.

Wilbur growled, "Come on, Terry. Let's get out of here. I'll drive you home." He reached out to take Terry's arm.

Dr. Merriweather's voice stopped him. "Just a minute, young man!" he said. "Don't touch her!"

Wilbur scowled, "You off your rocker, doc? Come on, Terry." He fastened a paw around her bare arm.

The doctor said, "Look at your arm, Terry."

She looked down at her arm where Wilbur's hand had been. Faint, reddish welts showed on the skin. "Bumps!" said Terry. She looked puzzled. "But I didn't have any adhesive tape on my arm!"

"No," said Dr. Merriweather. "But Wilbur's hand was just there. You're not allergic to adhesive tape. You're allergic to Wilbur! I'd advise you to stay away from him."

"And I," I said, "am just the guy to see that she follows the doctor's orders!" I shouldered the Louisville Slugger to a ready position, took Terry's arm and skillfully swung her past the flabbergasted coach of the Ferndale Championship Girl's Softball Team.

"On the way to your house," I said into Terry's ear, which was now very close to my mouth, "I'll stop in at the telegraph office and wire my office that I've picked up an allergy and that it'll be several days before I get over it."

"Oh, yes," she said, "at least!"

POPULATION CHECK

**Spring's no longer the season
For young men to be courtly;
You don't know the reason?
Federal Form 1040.**

—Mary Aikus

the article therein would support Miss Carson's injured hip?"

The doctor eyed me curiously. He ripped open the box, brushed aside the tissue and extracted the number one item of the Snuggie Company, Inc. He said, "My word!" inspecting closely. "It would provide more support than any taping job I could do with adhesive tape," he said finally.

"You mean if Terry wore one of them danged things she could play ball tomorrow?" demanded Uncle Seth.

The doctor stretched the Snuggie in a professional manner. "Absolutely!" He chuckled. "With one of these on I'm inclined to think a person could walk if the hip was broken."

Wilbur said, "As coach of this team I'm opposed to any of our players wearing . . . that . . . garment. He's just looking for a testimonial."

"You shuddup!" said Uncle Seth. "I'm manager of this outfit!" He dipped his head at Terry. "Go in the back room and try that thing on," he ordered.

Terry said, "I won't! I never have and I never will!"

U. S. AIR FORCE PRIVATELY ADMITS "Flying Saucers are Interplanetary!"



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New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Sirs:

This will acknowledge your letter of recent date regarding a proposed book on "flying saucers" by Major Donald E. Keyhoe, U. S. Marine Corps, retired.

We in the Air Force recognize Major Keyhoe as a responsible, accurate reporter. His long association and cooperation with the Air Force, in our study of unidentified flying objects, qualifies him as a leading civilian authority on this investigation.

All the sighting reports and other information he listed have been cleared and made available to Major Keyhoe from Air Technical Intelligence records, at his request.

The Air Force, and its investigating agency, "Project Bluebook," are aware of Major Keyhoe's conclusion that the "flying Saucers" are from another planet. The possibility exists. So be some strange natural if the apparently natural observers are correct interplanetary answer?

Read the whole
FLYING SAUCERS!
BY MAJOR DONALD E.

NONSENSE

FLYING SAUCERS?

"Some writers have implied that many persons within the Air Force have been driven to conclude that saucers are interplanetary. This is simply not so. Not one of the principal Air Force investigators favors the interplanetary solution, and not a single shred of positive evidence exists to support this weird conclusion."

"Although many reported sightings still bear the label 'unsolved,' largely for insufficient evidence, the Air Forces generally recognize that the explanations I have suggested in terms of natural phenomena are probably correct, and infinitely more acceptable than the fantastic postulate of manned craft from outer space."

Donald H. Menzel

By DONALD H. MENZEL

*Professor of Astrophysics,
Harvard University*

FLYING SAUCERS ARE THE BUNK!

**SURE, THERE ARE SUCH THINGS, AND PEOPLE HAVE BEEN
SEEING THEM FOR CENTURIES. BUT SPACE SHIPS CARRYING
INVADERS FROM ANOTHER PLANET? DON'T BE SILLY.**

Throughout the ages, apparitions have plagued the human race. Primitive people generally believed in the existence of demons, ghosts, elves, goblins, dragons, sea serpents—to mention just a few of the more common fantasies.

And now we are seeing flying saucers! What are they! Are they real! Or will they go the way of dragons?

Saucers have been seen flashing like silver in the sunlight. Others have been seen at night, luminous globes or disk-shaped blobs of light. Sometimes they

stand still, at other times they move or veer with tremendous speeds. Estimates of size have varied from a few feet to several hundred feet in diameter, with 50 feet being somewhere near the average. Saucers have been seen from the ground and from planes. Some have skimmed along the horizon; others have soared to great heights.

In the early days of the scare, saucers caused, directly or indirectly, at least two plane crashes and several deaths. The mysterious character of the phenomena appeared to demand secrecy. But the re-

Condensed from the book "Flying Saucers", by Donald H. Menzel. Harvard University Press. Cambridge. 1953. Copyright 1953 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

strictions and the red tape of military classification, however necessary, have long delayed the solution of the problem. Scientists who might easily have provided the key that would unlock the secrets of the saucers did not receive detailed information—information necessary for a serious study of the whole problem. Second, the restrictions served only to deepen the fear of an already frightened public.

Rumors flew like the saucers. Suggested identifications included weather balloons, distant airplanes, meteors, kites, wind-blown newspapers, hallucinations—practically everything including *craft from interplanetary space!*

Of all the possibilities, it was the last that struck the public imagination. Here was Jules Verne brought up to date! Space craft from Venus, or perhaps from Mars, controlled, according to some reports, by miniature beings 26 inches high.

Several books and countless magazine articles have argued that the saucers represent some type of space ship. But most of the authors have disclaimed having any inside information.

In the preface of my book, from which this article has been condensed, I have made this statement: "I shall use the phrase 'true flying saucer' to refer to the 20 percent of sightings which the Air Force lists as unexplained. And, in this sense, I have adopted the thesis that: Flying saucers are real; people have seen them; they are not what people thought they saw."

"I present evidence to show that this mysterious residue consists of the rags and tags of meteorological optics: mirages, reflections in mist, refractions and reflections by ice crystals. Some phenomena are probably related to the aurora; others are unusual forms of shooting stars. A few probably represent natural phenomena that we still do not fully understand."

Flying saucers are real—as real as a rainbow and no more dangerous. Men have recorded them throughout history; even the Bible refers to them. But the objects identified as "saucers" comprise not one but at least five different types. A saucer seen during the daytime is not the same as one seen at night. A saucer seen from an airplane may differ appreciably from a saucer seen from the ground. Failure to recognize this simple fact has been one of the basic stumbling blocks that has long postponed our discovering what the saucers really are.

The current saucer epidemic started on June 24, 1947, when Kenneth Arnold, a businessman from Boise, Idaho, was making a routine flight from Chehalis to Yakima, Washington.

Just as he neared Mount Rainier, he saw what appeared to be a chain of unfamiliar aircraft flying close to the mountain.

"I could see their outline quite plainly against the snow . . ." he said. "They flew very close to the mountain tops, directly south to southeast down the hogback of the range, flying like geese in a diagonal, chainlike line, as if they were linked together."

"They were approximately 20 or 25 miles away, and I couldn't see a tail on them. . . . They were flat like a pie-pan and so shiny they reflected the sun like a mirror. I never saw anything so fast."

Arnold's story was of such a nature as to demand official investigation. The U.S. Air Force stepped into the picture. They set up "Project Saucer," to investigate sightings in general and to study the various phenomena from different angles.

Although what Arnold saw has remained a mystery until this day, I simply cannot understand why the simplest explanation of all has been overlooked. The basic clues are in Arnold's original words: "Down the hogback of the range . . . as if they were linked together . . . a chain of saucer-like things . . . like a pie-pan and so shiny they reflected the sun like a mirror."

I have spent considerable time in the high Rocky Mountains in Colorado. From the High Altitude Observatory of Harvard University and the University of Colorado, I have occasionally watched through binoculars, or a small telescope, billowing blasts of snow, ballooning from the tops of the ridges. For the air along any mountain range is often highly turbulent. These rapidly shifting, tilting clouds of snow would reflect the sun like a mirror. And the rocking surfaces would make the chain sweep along something like a wave, with only a momentary reflection from each crest.

THREE is another possibility. On a calm, clear day the earth's atmosphere may contain one or more sharp layers of haze or dust. Such a layer is almost invisible if we are below or above it. But it will be extremely marked to any plane flying close to it. Fog or haze can, under certain conditions, reflect the sun in almost mirror fashion.

A layer of this kind may well have been present during Arnold's famous flight. But, over the jagged range, it would have been tilted, torn, and twisted by the violent air circulation, so that it could have produced the observed effect. Perhaps condensation arising from the turbulence may have contributed to the reflectivity of the cloud.

I feel certain that turbulence over the ridge was in the main responsible for Arnold's saucers. But, whether the apparent metallic glint came from billows of snow or billows of haze, we do not have enough evidence at the moment to decide.

I can find no evidence that anyone has considered seriously the foregoing explanation of what Arnold saw. The distinguished Navy physicist, Dr. Urner Liddel, has independently suggested that reflections in fog or mist may account for many of the saucers. And the only reason I've seen given for the rejection of this hypothesis is its apparent inability to explain also the green fireballs that mystify observers on the desert of New Mexico. To my mind, this procedure is about as sensible as refusing to eat a hot dog merely because bananas, which have a similar shape, do not happen to agree with you. Actually the green fireballs are an entirely different phenomenon.

As Kenneth Arnold's spectacular description of the mysterious flying disks spread over the country, additional sightings swept the nation. To see a flying saucer, apparently all one had to do was look at the sky for a reasonable length of time, and then a saucer would obligingly skim into view.

The mere existence of the saucer scare led newspapers to publicize events that otherwise might have remained purely local—for example, the observation of a fireball of unusual brightness. These objects are common; under normal circumstances, only the most brilliant of such displays would be news. The attention of the public, thus focused on nighttime apparitions, shortly reported luminous disks whizzing singly or in groups across the sky.

Most of the objects proved to be bright meteors—mere shooting stars. There is nothing at all mysterious about such objects, at least nothing mysterious in the flying saucer sense.

But now reports began to filter in of strange lights seen flying across the desert at night. These reports never were fully released, because the sightings lay so close to the White Sands Proving Ground and the Holloman Air Base, in New Mexico.

One of the earliest nighttime reports came in August, 1947. Two pilots saw a big, black, cigar-shaped body silhouetted against the evening sky. The object seemed to be dead ahead. They avoided collision only by swerving sharply, during which time the object crossed directly in front of them. The pilots then tried to follow the dark body which outdistanced them despite the fact that they were flying at 175 miles an hour.

Four minutes later it vanished. Their report says that the object resembled "a C-54 without motors, wings, or visible means of propulsion—smooth surfaced and streamlined."

I believe that what the flyers saw was a mirage. Few persons, except those familiar with details of meteorological optics, realize how frequently mirages occur. Many persons don't know what a mirage is or what can cause it. First, a mirage is something real, not a hallucination like a pink elephant. Nor is it an optical illusion. Light may depart appreciably from its nearly straight-line path when exceptional temperature conditions occur in the lower atmosphere, as, for example, when an intensely hot or extremely cold layer of air lies close to the earth's surface. The air acts as a sort of lens to bring a distant light source into focus. The lens is imperfect, so the world seen through it is distorted and unfamiliar; it is like looking through someone else's spectacles. No wonder one sees weird things—even flying saucers.

The effect that the flyers saw was compounded out of a raising of land into the sky and a lowering of sky into the land. The black object that resembled a C-54 was a mirage of the distant landscape, the darkened surface of the earth "lifted," as if by magic, to form an island in the sky. But the form, size and position of this island are very sensitive indeed to the position of the observer. If he moves, the image may dart in a counter direction. And as he tries to run it down, the image itself will appear smaller and smaller, finally vanishing into the distance. There is nothing really mysterious about the report, unless it is the fact that its interpretation has remained a mystery for nearly five years.

A number of objects sighted from planes conform reasonably well to the detailed description that two Eastern Airlines pilots gave of a strange object they encountered in the skies near Montgomery, Alabama, at 2:45 A.M., July 23, 1948. The pilots described the object as "a wingless aircraft, 100 feet long, cigar-shaped, and about twice the diameter of a B-29 with no protruding surfaces.

"Whatever it was, it flashed down toward us and we veered to the left. It veered to its left and passed us about 700 feet to our right and above us. Then, as if the pilot had seen us and wanted to avoid us, it pulled up with a tremendous burst of flame from the rear and zoomed into the clouds, its prop wash or jet wash rocking our DC-3."

The craft appeared to possess neither wings nor fins, but both the pilots gained the impression that the plane was illuminated inside, for an



Flying saucers? Despite claims of a current book, the Air Force says, "No authentic physical evidence has been received establishing the existence of space ships from other planets."

intense glare, like that from burning magnesium, radiated from what seemed to be windows in the cabin of the craft.

One might put down to imagination the rocking of the DC-3 by "prop wash or jet wash." But one could not in any way question that the men had reported something unusual, something that was a real flying saucer.

One of the most frightening incidents in all of flying-saucer history occurred on the night of October 1, 1948, when National Guard Lieutenant George F. Gorman reported a 27-minute dogfight that he had with a flying saucer over Fargo, North Dakota. Gorman had been on a routine F-51 patrol flight and was returning to his base. As he started to land, Gorman sighted what he took to be the tail-light of a plane a thousand feet or so distant. He moved in for a closer look.

He reported: "It was from six to eight inches in diameter, clear white and completely round, with a sort of fuzz at the edges. It was blinking on and off. As I approached, however, the light suddenly became steady and pulled into a sharp left bank. I thought that it was making a pass at the Tower.

"I dived after it and brought my manifold pressure up to 60 inches, but I couldn't catch up with the thing. It started gaining altitude, and again made a left bank.

"I put my 51 into a sharp turn and tried to cut the light off.... Suddenly it made a sharp right turn and we headed straight at each other.... I went into a dive and the light passed over my canopy at about 500 feet."

Gorman continued the dogfight. The ball of light seemed to be directed by human intelligence, although its small size precluded the

possibility that this "saucer" was manned by a being within it.

An observer from the ground, watching Gorman's dogfight, reported that he could see a light of some fast-moving object. This report gave additional weight, if any was needed, to Gorman's statement. Unfortunately, the report omits some significant data that would help in unraveling the mystery.

During the latter stages of World War II, Allied aircraft frequently reported glowing balls of light that tended to accompany the planes on bombing missions. Observed over both Germany and Japan, these mysterious light blobs would fly along docilely, as long as the pilot made no effort to get rid of them. However, if he tried any dodging technique, these balls of fire would fly right in front of the plane, and put on an exhibition of shadow boxing not dissimilar to that displayed by Gorman's sphere of light. The airmen of World War II called these objects "fireball fighters" or, more commonly, "foo fighters."

To my mind, the similarity of Gorman's object to the foo fighters seems entirely reasonable. I think Gorman was right when he said that the foo fighter seemed to be controlled by thought. However, the thought that controlled it was his own. But the object was only light reflected from a distant source by a whirlpool of air over one wing of the plane—perhaps a whirlpool containing ice crystals or mist. The fact that the foo-ball sightings increased toward the end of World War II signifies that more of our planes had by then been damaged in combat or by antiaircraft fire. The patches on the wings are not always perfect and the flow of air over them can be quite turbulent. The reflectivity of the air whirl may be increased

by the formation of fog or even ice crystals within it.

In all probability the saucer scare would have completely faded away had it not been for a tragedy that struck on January 7, 1948. Observers from Godman Air Force Base, Fort Knox, Kentucky, saw from the ground an unidentified object that resembled "an ice-cream cone topped with red." The Godman Tower requested that four National Guard F-51 planes investigate. Here, in part, is the official Air Force release:

"Three of the planes closed in on the object, and reported it to be metallic and of 'tremendous size.' One pilot described it as 'round like a teardrop and at times almost fluid.'

"The Flight Leader, Captain Thomas F. Mantell, contacted the Godman Tower with an initial report

SPORT SPURTS

Clark Griffith, president of the Washington Senators, who never hit a golf ball until he was fifty-one, went around an 18-hole course in 77 when he was seventy-seven years old.

Alfred J. Reach was the first professional baseball player, having been engaged to play for the Philadelphia Athletics in 1867. The first complete pro team was the famous Cincinnati Red Stockings in 1869; the total payroll was \$9,500.

—Harold Helfer

that the object was traveling at half his speed at 12 o'clock high.

"The time was 1515 hours (3:15 P.M.).

"That was the last radio contact made by Mantell with the Godman Tower.

"Later that day his body was found in the wreckage of his plane near Fort Knox. . . ."

What was it Mantell had really chased? Had the disk attacked him and wrecked his plane? Official silence on the question stimulated the ready imaginations of those not familiar with routine military procedure. Thus, from this unusual incident and useless tragedy, the flying-saucer scare took a new lease on life, which has continued until this day.

Captain Mantell was chasing a bona fide saucer, if my interpretation of what he saw is correct. The clue lies in the shape and color of the object: a luminous ice-cream cone

"topped with red." Color in the sky is significant, especially as early as 3:00 in the afternoon. Sunset may tint clouds with many shades of red, but red in the middle of the afternoon, especially on a mid-winter day, suggests only one thing to the scientist familiar with meteorological optics. The patch of light, with little question, was a "mock sun" caused by ice crystals in cirrus clouds that lay even higher than Mantell's plane was able to reach.

This mock sun and attached halos could have produced an effect similar to the one described. And it would also account fully for the fact that Mantell never was able to close in on it. Chasing mock suns or "sundogs," as they are sometimes called, is like chasing the rainbow. It races on ahead at the same speed you are moving yourself. Analysis of data furnished by the Air Force indicates that Mantell may have mistaken a nearby sundog for the real sun. His saucer, then, must have been the sun itself, dimmed and blurred by clouds of ice crystals. Like a moth attracted to a candle, Mantell met his death trying to fly into the sun.

Why, I ask, has this identification of Mantell's object taken so long? No wonder a jittery and imaginative American public, faced with a statement that the Air Force still considers the object "unidentified," begins to imagine frightening things—like interplanetary saucers!

Although the flying-saucer scare began with observations from an airplane, people soon found that they could see saucers equally well from the ground—maybe not exactly the same kind of saucer, but nonetheless satisfying to the imagination. On the very day that Arnold recorded his famous "pie-plates" from Mount Rainier, Lieutenant-Governor Donald S. Whitehead, of Idaho, saw a mysterious object that looked something like a comet, hanging low in the Western sky. We still cannot say whether this evening object was a variety of saucer or whether it was the planet Saturn or Mercury seen, as Dr. J. Allen Hynek, of Ohio State University, later claimed, through a haze of cirrus clouds.

On the very day of the original Arnold incident, a Portland prospector named Fred M. Johnson reported that he had seen "a strange reflection in the sky." As he examined the phenomenon more closely, he recognized half a dozen or so disks, about 30 feet in diameter. He stated that, as long as he could see the disks, the needle of his compass-watch "weaved wildly from side to side." The behavior of the saucers, according to this report, is distinctive enough to label them as probably a true sight-

ing. Bright reflections from clouds were the most likely cause.

The chance association of a wobbling compass needle with the appearance of the saucers fired the imagination of many who later dragged magnetism into the picture, as a possible motive power for saucers in general. A good compass is a fairly delicate mechanism to handle, and the needle wobbles on the slightest provocation. Excitement and haste could easily have made Johnson's hand tremble. In my opinion, the reported magnetic disturbance did not exist and had nothing to do with the observed phenomena.

Nevertheless, the authors of several books and articles stress this particular event as showing that the saucers fly, on magnetic tracks, from star or planet to earth.

I should be the last person to insist that we earthlings know all there is to know about magnetism, and that no further discoveries are possible. But magnetic lines of force are not moving like the ropes of a ski tow.

We have no hope of harnessing magnetic fields as a substitute for some other source of power. But if someone *should* find a way of utilizing magnetic fields, certainly it would not be along the lines suggested in any of the pseudoscientific records that pretend to explain how saucers may employ the magnetic field for motive power. The accompanying descriptions are generally so much mumbo jumbo. These methods would be no more effective as a source of power than filling the gas tank of your car with water from the garden hose.

It is, perhaps, not too surprising that most of the daytime saucer reports have generally been traced to some definite object other than the conventional or bona fide saucer. Kites, weather balloons, clouds, and distant planes have accounted for many of these sightings.

A man sitting in the park on a calm summer afternoon scarcely realizes how intense the winds aloft may be. They may be blowing in gales stronger than 60 miles-an-hour, with different layers moving in opposite directions. Objects such as newspapers or kites can be lifted to great heights, where they may fly for hundreds of miles. Weather balloons, which are often released in clusters rather than singly, are not at all uncommon. Moreover, all such objects look disklike when viewed against the sky. And it is extremely hard for even the experienced observer to recognize them for what they really are.

The Air Force has regarded one type of saucer as its own special property. A number of high-ranking Air Force officials were present at the testing of a new plane, whose secrets are

not important to our story. The test was over and the plane swung in low for a landing. And then a startling thing happened.

A small, dark saucer seemed to detach itself from the belly of the large craft, drop, and then fly away at enormous speed—presumably carrying with it the secrets that its occupants had collected.

I gather that this strange spectacle, which has since had several repetitions, has been one of the major official excuses for secrecy. And yet this saucer phenomenon is easiest of all to explain. The mysterious traveler was a mirage of the plane. The Air Force will doubtless be glad to learn that its secrets are safe.

So much for the saucers seen during the day. Let us turn briefly to consider the saucers of night, as seen from the ground.

Life has publicized the multiple-saucer groups, of which the prototype appeared on August 25, 1951, and on several successive nights thereafter, at Lubbock, Texas. This incident is also one of the best-authenticated records. Three professors of Texas Technological College, all standing together, simultaneously and independently saw an irregular pattern of lights flash quickly and noiselessly across the sky. Several nights later an 18-year-old student photographed the objects, which took the form of a V, like flying geese or planes. The professors emphasized the fact that the lights they saw were spaced at random.

The photographs leave much to be desired. If the objects were moving as rapidly as reported by the three professors, no one could possibly have photographed them with the techniques that were reportedly used. However, the speed of motion may well have been quite different in the two cases, and there seems to be no good reason to doubt the reality of the phenomenon.

In a sense, the Lubbock lights are by no means exceptional, although the number of objects seen at one time is perhaps greater than the average. And the tendency that the objects have of flying, occasionally, at least, in geometric formation, is in itself a significant clue to their origin. I assume that the cause is reflection in a rippling layer of fine haze, probably just over the heads of the observers. The source of light may be a distant, or even nearby, house or group of houses, a row of street lamps, or automobile headlights. The reflection may have been in shiny overhead wires of a power line or radio antenna.

The Arnold story was scarcely 24 hours old before the hoaxers, jokers and publicity seekers of the nation moved in. The sky rained wheels. Wheels of cardboard and wheels of plywood. Wheels decorated with fragments from an old electric fan; wheels marked with a hammer and sickle, and labeled U.S.S.R. in big red letters. Spectacular wheels, with fireworks attached. Wheels!

And even when no wheels or saucers were available, imagination supplied the rest. For example, a woman excitedly telephoned the FBI and earnestly reported that representatives of a foreign nation were flying overhead and practicing code in the skies. In fact, she had plainly seen them spell out the word "Pepsi" right over her head!

Not all of the incidents were funny. Two men were killed while investigating a hoax. The perpetrators were not prosecuted, nor was the government investigation carried to a conclusion. Or, if it was, the authorities have remained completely silent.

A guest speaker, at a general science class at the University of Denver, spoke glibly and convincingly of various saucer crashes that had occurred some 500 miles southwest of Denver. The midget operators of the vehicles were dead, scorched by the heat generated by rapid passage through the earth's atmosphere.

When asked directly, "Did you see the men?" the speaker's reply was somewhat amazing: "Don't ask me that question. For reasons I can't explain, I can't say."

Later investigation indicated that the speaker may very well have been talking about the moon—the mythical one made of cheese. His story had that many holes in it.

Despite the enormous number of cases that we can write off immediately as hoaxes, balloons, clouds, birds, planes, kites, and the like, we must

Another photograph of alleged space ships. Professor Menzel, however, notes that all such phenomena can be explained readily by a competent physicist, and he decries the current tendency to maintain that, because an explanation isn't forthcoming immediately, the photographed objects must, perforce, be from another distant planet.



conclude that the flying saucers are real—real, that is, in the sense that people are actually seeing something. The stimulus for a view of a flying saucer comes from without, not within one's mind. The saucers are not fancy or hallucination.

When I say that the saucers are real, however, I do not necessarily mean that they are solid objects or even that they are material. For example, I think of the rainbow as real, although no one has ever touched a rainbow or picked it up.

Dozens of persons have stated that the saucers are disks of metal. The best and, to my mind, the *only* sure test of a metal is the ease with which it carries electric current. Who has held a saucer long enough to give it such a test?

We now glimpse the real meaning of the statement that the saucers are metal. What the observer intended to say was that the saucer had a metallic glint—which is something altogether different. A piece of clear glass will reflect light, under certain circumstances, even better than a metallic surface.

These observations dispose of the "must-be-metal" argument. The saucers may be metal or nonmetal. They may be solid, liquid or gas. They may be only light itself—as long as that light looks as if it had been reflected by metal.

MANY of the apparitions we now are reporting as flying saucers have always been there. People have seen them and reported them in the past. They are even mentioned in the Bible. And occasionally we have experienced a saucer scourge—never as great as the one today, but nonetheless significant. The claim that we are just now seeing them is complete nonsense.

On November 22, 1896, inhabitants of Oakland, California, sighted an unfamiliar object in the sky. Passengers on an Alameda streetcar saw something flying above them, a sort of winged cigar, projecting a stream of brilliant light from its head.

The excitement that gripped Oakland strongly resembled the one that swept the world after the saucer stories of 1947 had appeared. The object moved eastward and was viewed by numerous persons. A Chicago newspaper reported that a letter had been received from the airship "Pegasus." Sightings and speculation as to the nature of the ship filled the papers.

The 1947 scare, except for its size and duration, closely followed that of 1897. There were the original rumors, the self-hallucinations, the hoaxes, and the interest in sky-watching. A few of the reported incidents probably referred to true flying saucers. But most of what was seen can

be attributed to stars, or to a lenticular cloud or mirage.

On November 17, 1882, one of the greatest flying saucers of modern times sped swiftly and silently across the heavens, exhibiting the characteristic cigar-shaped form when it attained maximum altitude. It probably was associated with a brilliant aurora borealis on display at the time.

Almost every period of recorded history has seen flying saucers. It is most likely that the wheels of Ezekiel, reported in the Bible, were sundogs and associated halos.

FLYING saucers have been around for a long time. Characteristically enough, as long as no one completely understands the mystery, people feel quite free to trust in their own interpretation or in that of the most convincing authority. Scientific pretenders today hold as much power over us as did the ancient sorcerers over our fathers.

Pseudo science contends with authentic science. Newspapers promote this conflict by refusing to distinguish between forged and valid authority. They invent "scientific experts" by the dozen. The science articles in many journals, too, are frequently written by men who obviously are incapable either of scientific thinking or of understanding what they report. Some authors will write what they think the public would like to read, no matter how untrue the story may be.

Against such overwhelming odds, how can the layman possibly figure out the truth? How can he distinguish between science fact and pseudoscientific fiction?

There are two ways. One is to scrutinize the source and authority of the evidence. The second method is to test the coherence of the details as they stand. By this, I mean looking for false premises, gaps in evidence, and illogical conclusions.

The functioning of the senses constitutes only a limited part of our total learning process. The messages they send to the brain would be unintelligible if our brain did not organize them and interpret them in the light of human experience.

Our mental activities select and organize impressions. In so far as these are familiar, they become meaningful in terms of experience. But if we were to receive a set of impressions entirely outside of our experience, we would not understand them.

A significant fallacy lies in the maxim "seeing is believing." The eye is only the intricate and marvelous instrument that communicates the external world to our intellect, yet we often consider this instrument as identical with understanding.

Still another powerful force influences perception and experience. This force is motivation or feeling. In the case of saucers, the predominant feeling that distorts understanding is fear. The flying-saucer believer is somewhat like a man forced to spend the night in undesirable quarters; a dirty hotel. Expecting to find bedbugs in the bed, he begins to notice every tiny twitch of his body. He almost hopes that one will bite, so as to remove his uncertainty. Thus do attitudes and emotions rule behavior.

A further note: many reports of lights or saucers in the sky refer to a peculiar rocking or wobbling motion. But the motion is often in the eye of the viewer. No eyeball is absolutely stationary and no one can keep his gaze fixed perfectly. The motion can increase under hysteria.

One should particularly distrust any observation so fleeting that he cannot really analyze it, at least unless it is confirmed by an independent observer.

In the amount of space remaining, it would be impossible to analyze all of the flying-saucer phenomena. The problem involves optics, the phenomenon of mirage and the attendant relationships of the effect of light on water, ice crystals and atmosphere.

There are such matters as lenses of air. If a day happens to be unusually hot, distant objects may seem to writhe and twist as if alive. The air proves to be a lens of a sort, usually a bad lens, but occasionally fairly effective.

Our position is a little like that of the policeman who, coming home late one night, saw a dim figure ahead of him in the hall. He called "Hands up!" as he reached for his gun. He saw his antagonist also reach for his gun, so he quickly fired just as his opponent fired back at him—to the accompaniment of crashing glass. He had seen his own image in the hall mirror.

In this brief survey, there is one final point.

Pure-food and narcotic acts protect us from potentially dangerous medicines, foods, or drugs. Yet, exploitation of the minds of the American public, feeding them fiction in the guise of fact under the protection of a free press, or frightening people with fanciful ghosts—these, too, are potentially dangerous. The public is afraid of saucers—and we need only a match to set off a national panic that would far exceed that of the Invasion from Mars. In fact, if a foreign power were to pull off a surprise attack on the United States, millions of Americans would conclude that the flying saucers from Mars or Venus were finally landing!

Old Dogs and New Tricks



Fascinating facts about
our canine companions

By JOHN T. DUNLAVY

The dog population of the United States has been growing four times as fast as the human population. It is estimated that there are a total of 22,000,000 dogs in the U.S. at the present time, about one fourth of which are used for such specific purposes as hunting, herding or security work. A total of half a billion dollars is spent annually on dogs. The largest portion of this, \$175,000,000, is spent for prepared dog foods. Incidentally such as collars, leashes, beds, toys, sweaters and jewelry account for some \$5,000,000 a year.

The average dog in the United States is just under four years of age. The record for dog longevity was held by a North Carolina mongrel who was 26 at the time of a nation-wide search for the oldest living dog conducted a few years ago by the Gaines Dog Research Center. There are two popular theories on the equivalent of a dog's age to a human's. One is that a year in a dog's life is equal to seven in a human's. A more recent claim is that a dog's development at one year is equivalent to a human at 16; at two years to a human at 24; at three to a human at 30; at four to a human at 35 and from then on the basis is one dog year for five human years. The average lifespan today for normal healthy dogs is 9 years.

Dog days occur from July 3 to August 11 and were so named in 450 B.C. after the dog star, Sirius. Contrary to legend, dogs do not have a tendency to go mad during this period. Although rabies are more common in dogs than in other animals, rodents, horses, cats, monkeys and many other animals are susceptible to this disease. Dogs with rabies drool excessively but they do not foam at the mouth. There is no cure for rabies.

A dog's hearing is three times as good as a human's and he can hear sounds pitched higher than those audible to the human ear. While a dog's sense of smell is highly developed, his most acute faculty is his great sensitivity to movement however slight. On the other hand, dogs are not only color blind, but their eyesight is inferior in other respects, and they see the world about them in a dull, gray light.

Canine dental and medical care has become a big business accounting for some \$50,000,000 spent each year among the nation's 4000 veterinarian dog specialists. Ailing dogs receive sulfa, penicillin, aureomycin, chloromycetin and even terramycin. Spectacles, false teeth and artificial legs are among fairly recent medical innovations for dogs, and modern medicine is credited with adding about 5 years to their life span in the past twenty-five years. Mental care for dogs is the latest wrinkle. The SPCA of Los Angeles recently hired a dog psychiatrist who estimated that modern living has made about 40% of the dog population neurotic.

The largest litter on record in the U.S. was the birth of twenty-three puppies to a Welsh Foxhound in Pennsylvania. The tallest breed of dogs is the Irish Wolfhound, some of which stand 36 inches high at the shoulder. The heaviest are the Mastiffs and the St. Bernards, many of which weigh over 200 pounds. Greyhounds, clocked at 60 miles an hour, are the fastest with whippets, at 35 mph, second. The smallest breed is the

Chihuahua. The bloodhound has the highest developed power of smell of all dogs. While the dog is considered an unusually intelligent animal, his IQ is inferior to that of a monkey.

Experts assume that dogs descended from wolves before the beginning of recorded history, but as early as 50,000 years ago they were a separate breed and companions to men. Crudely drawn pictures of dogs have been found among the oldest records of man in all parts of the earth. One of the earliest books on dogs was written in Latin almost 2000 years ago by Michael Angelo Biondi and dedicated to the King of the Gauls. Its title was "A Little Book About Dogs and Hunting."

Seeing Eye dogs were developed by the Germans during World War I. About 90% of such guide dogs are German Shepherds although some Boxers, Doberman Pinschers and Labrador Retrievers are also used. Seeing Eye dogs do not watch traffic signals when guiding their blind masters. They are trained to note the flow of cars and the movement of other pedestrians as their signal to cross a street.

Dogs are usually divided into six major groups: Gun or Sporting; Hound; Working; Terrier; Toy, and Non-Sporting. There are 111 different breeds of dogs in the United States, and a total of 3,500,000 pedigrees are registered. Male dogs reach maturity at one year but at 9 or 10 months become interested in females. Females mature between 8 months and one year. Gestation period in dogs is 62 days, the same as for wolves. Stud fees for pure bred male dogs range from \$25.00 to \$250.00.

Dog specialists have come up with findings that debunk some previous beliefs about dogs. They have learned that: female dogs are not smarter than males; neither sex can be housebroken easier; neither is better mannered, nor more loyal nor more affectionate. Neither male nor female have shown any advantage over the other in field trials. Dogs do not need bones, they serve no useful purpose in a dog's life and actually may do a dog harm by wearing off tooth enamel. Baths are not necessary for dogs provided a good combing and brushing is given periodically. You can teach an old dog of either sex new tricks. Almost all dogs can be taught simple tricks providing the master follows a regular pattern of training and rewards. Trick training should begin around six months.

Automobiles kill over 400,000 dogs yearly. During World War II about one quarter of a million dogs were used by all nations for military duty. Today the U.S. Army uses about 1000 dogs for sentry duty. All of them are German Shepherds.

While clipped poodles represent high fashion today, the practice originated centuries ago in European circuses where poodles were clipped to give them a comical appearance. Many people think the result is still comical. Shifts in dog popularity plus the high cost of feeding and more restricted living space have created so much interest in the poodle and toy dog group that kennel keepers predict the larger dogs will eventually become almost extinct in this country. •

the Treasure of Yancy Creek

The dream of a lifetime—gold for the taking buried in that cave. It was enough to set a man's mind aflame and start him working as he'd never worked before.

By ED AINSWORTH

■ Inside the pocket of his faded old yellow duck pants, Matt Lamar felt the blue bottle cold against his leg. He sprawled in his usual spot on the porch of the two-room clapboard shanty, with the sun just beyond his toes, but today he did not intend to stay as was his wont.

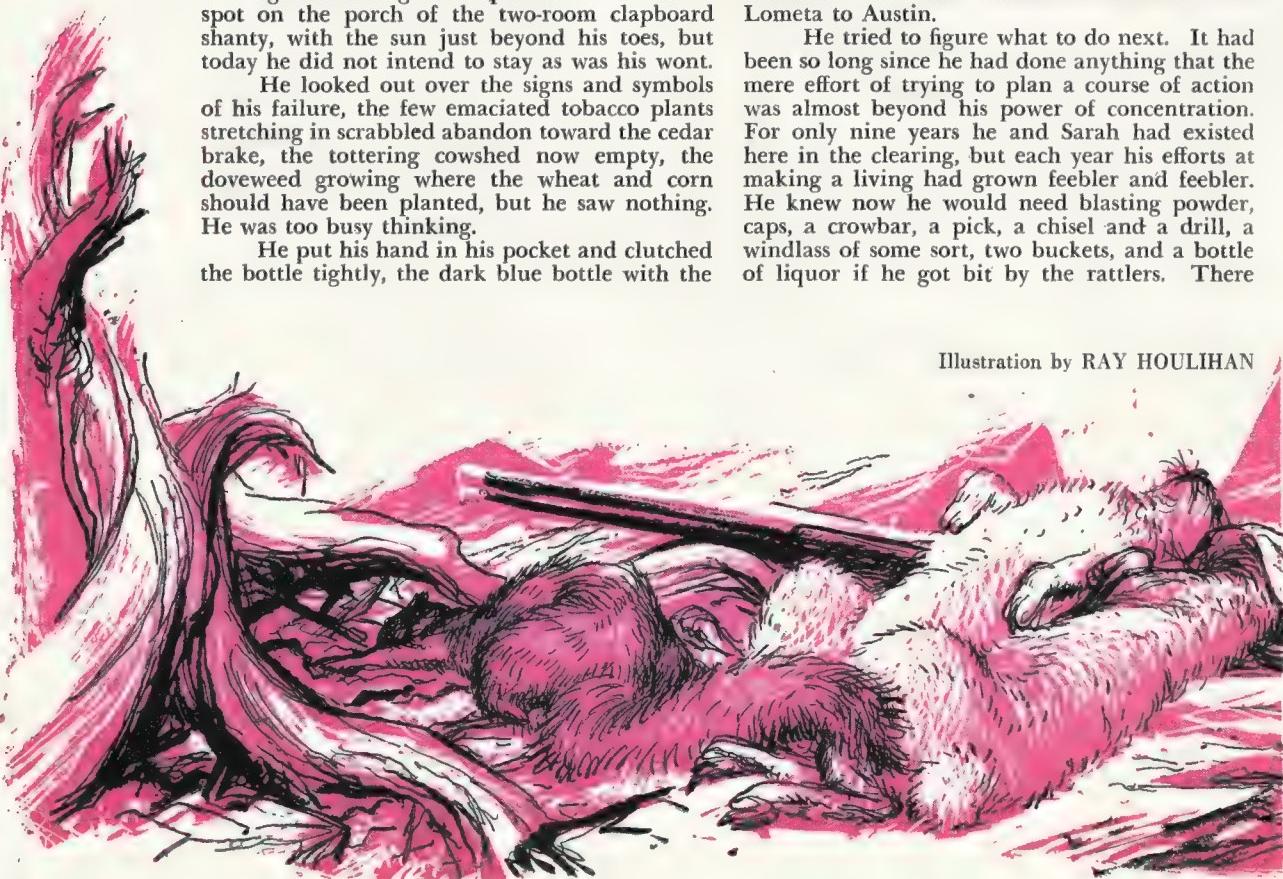
He looked out over the signs and symbols of his failure, the few emaciated tobacco plants stretching in scrawled abandon toward the cedar brake, the tottering cowshed now empty, the doveweed growing where the wheat and corn should have been planted, but he saw nothing. He was too busy thinking.

He put his hand in his pocket and clutched the bottle tightly, the dark blue bottle with the

cork that had gone to dust and the faded writing on the brownish paper. He held the bottle as if he feared it might fly out into the unseasonably hot April sun that was scorching the mesquites and the cedar brakes and the old Fort Concho Road and the Texas Colorado River basin from Lometa to Austin.

He tried to figure what to do next. It had been so long since he had done anything that the mere effort of trying to plan a course of action was almost beyond his power of concentration. For only nine years he and Sarah had existed here in the clearing, but each year his efforts at making a living had grown feebler and feebler. He knew now he would need blasting powder, caps, a crowbar, a pick, a chisel and a drill, a windlass of some sort, two buckets, and a bottle of liquor if he got bit by the rattlers. There

Illustration by RAY HOULIHAN





were bound to be plenty of rattlers down there.

Slowly his eyes focused on Sugar Loaf Mesa across Yancy Creek. He wondered again what had caused him to sit down on the granite boulder and to discover the bottle. If his brother Ed in Lampasas had not given him the four twelve-gauge shells, he would not have gone hunting, and if he had not gone hunting he would not have paused beside Yancy Creek to dip up a drink with his hat, and if he had not taken the drink he would not have gone over to the boulder to rest and would not have uncovered the blue of the bottle with his boot. He lingered on the thought of the dark blue bottle lying there partly covered on the gray decomposed granite earth, as incongruous as if he had turned up an African Pygmy or an Egyptian mummy. The whole isolated area was called the Devil's Gut, a tortured mass of giant boulders, close-packed cedars, precipitous bluffs, weird escarpments leading down to the Colorado itself.

He had laid down his old double-barrel Lefevre, his two rabbits and the squirrel, and picked up the bottle. It was heavy for its size and apparently of great age. The glass was opaque, the ridging of the sides arranged in a fluted pattern. An infinitely fine plaited wire, apparently silver, was crisscrossed over the neck and around the cork. As he lifted it, the cork disintegrated in dust. He upended the bottle and shook out the remaining flecks. Something rustled faintly inside. He peered into the bottle.

THERE was a paper. He took a cedar twig, stripped off the leaves, and cautiously worked at the paper, and in a moment it came out, a tight curl. Even though it felt like light parchment he unrolled it gently to keep it from tearing. In fact, it did begin to split and he concluded it was paper after all rather than parchment.

The writing on it was fairly legible, in black, but quite heavy as if it had been done with an improvised quill or a twig instead of a pen.

The date struck him first:

Feb. 17, 1837.

Better than 75 years ago, he thought quickly.

His eyes raced over the words, the quaint, desperate phrases:

Caint last much longer. Folowd 4 days by Indians. Food give out. 6 jack loads gold 13 jennets silver inggots hid 60 ft. deep in cave 15 paces N. We fild it with bouldrs. Leaving now, 4 of us, 2 wounded.

N. Gordon

Jas. Stone

Jose Carrillo

X (Tim Aten, his mark)

He had run the fifteen paces north, careful even in his frenzied excitement to try to step off a proper normal pace. Close to the base of Yancy Bluff he found the opening. It might have passed for just another pile of boulders. The opening of the cave was small and went straight down instead of into the bluff. He could only guess whether it turned horizontal later. It was impossible to see far down. The whole aperture was filled with gray granite, blocks of it, chunks, imponderable boulders. He found himself tearing at them with his hands. They were immovable. He was panting, his hands were beginning to bleed.

HE sat back on his haunches and tried to think. Sixty feet of material like that meant proper equipment and explosives and tools. It would be a long job. It would cost money.

For the first time in those nine years he wanted to get hold of some quick money. He had accepted his own laziness and drifting and inertia and evasion of life for so long he did not know how to start to get money. He and Sarah lived on small game and bee-tree honey and wild hog from the Colorado bottoms and an occasional sack of flour and some corn meal from his brother Ed's little store in town. When things ran out, they just got along for a spell on short rations.

He knew he wouldn't dare tell Sarah about this discovery. The one thing she could not abide was his treasure hunting. He had found this out many times before. She was docile and resigned about everything else, but she was tarnation set against any traipsing after hidden gold and silver.

Now, on the porch in the warmth of the sun which ordinarily would have lulled him into a pleasant somnolence long before this, he lay and grappled with his double problem, how to elude Sarah and how to get the money for his immediate needs. He was more than wide awake. He was straining for an idea, grasping in all directions as if he might seize some tangible scheme from the air.

He became aware Sarah was standing in the unscreened doorway, her face a patient mask, her still-young body apparently neuter in its shapeless calico wrapper, her dark hair hanging in a long careless knot on her neck.

"Meal's gone," she said without inflection.

She moved one bare foot to dislodge a persistent fly.

"Flour too."

"We got rabbit," he said.

She nodded, no hint of criticism in her face or gesture. It was acceptance

of a fact. There was a rabbit. There was no corn meal. There was no flour. The nine years had taken from her the power to go beyond those realities. She did not seek to lift the curtain on tomorrow. The burden of today was enough.

"Maybe I better go to town," he offered.

She nodded again.

His brain was working now. It was only nine o'clock in the morning. If he could go borrow Grady Nix's wagon, he could gather up the load of cedar poles that Grandpa Lamar cut before he died, and take them into town and get enough money at the lumber yard for sonic blasting powder to start with at the cave. He spared no thought for meal or flour.

With elaborate nonchalance, he got up and dawdled toward the road. Sarah scarcely raised her eyes. She appeared hardly aware he was gone. Her eyes dwelt almost unseeing on the mesquites where languid doves already were settling for their siestas to escape the midday heat.

MATT glanced back as soon as he passed the turn in the lane. Sarah was hidden from view. He began to run. It was an experiment at first, the only time in years he had done such a thing. Then he settled to it in earnest. His lungs rebelled, he gasped and his mouth fell open, but he kept going. The treasure spirit was in him, just as it had been in him since he was a tike, just as it had been in his father and his grandfather before him. He was on the glory trail, he was headed for Golconda.

After three hundred yards he had to slow down, but he managed to maintain a dog trot for the half mile to Grady's place.

When he came home that night, he had crowded two days' activity into one. His muscles ached, his hands were split, he could hardly walk the last fifty yards down the lane. But hidden in a squirrel hole in an old oak on Yancy Creek he had fifteen pounds of blasting powder and 200 feet of fuse, the reward for his handling of the cedar fence posts, the long ride into town, the painful unloading. With him now, too, he carried ten pounds of corn meal for the larder, the excuse for his trip.

Already he was planning his sortie for the morrow, how he was going to get away from the porch without being suspected. He had stayed on the porch most of the time, in good weather, for six or seven years except when he was hunting or scouting for treasure. Sarah was going to wonder about him being gone again from the porch so soon. It wouldn't be natural. Wearly he felt in his pocket to make sure he had the twelve .22 shells

his brother Ed had given him. They were going to be his excuse. He could always pretend he was going hunting for something to go with the corn meal.

He was more successful than he had expected. He wondered about it a little as he tramped stiffly but eagerly toward the Yancy before seven o'clock in the morning when there was still a little dew on the milkweed; he hadn't been up early enough to see dew in a long time. Sarah hadn't seemed suspicious at all. She hardly paid any attention when he left. He suddenly realized that maybe she hadn't paid much attention to anything for quite a spell. His acceptance of Sarah had been as automatic as his acceptance of his own inertia. She was a fact more than a woman, a fact in a shapeless wrapper.

Everything was ready for the carrying out of his plan. For years he had talked about throwing a small dam across the Yancy and diverting the water into a triangular patch of about fifteen acres of good bottom land, a real irrigation project. He had never done anything about it, but it had formed a conversation piece long enough to be an established possibility. Now he had simply told Sarah he was going to take a look at it, that maybe in a day or two he might even do a little blasting; he had to arrange to explain the noise of the blasting somehow. He knew the sound would reach the house from the site of the cave.

As he stepped from rock to rock across the Yancy just above Little Falls, balancing himself with his rifle in one hand and his pick in the other, he suddenly realized with a shock that if the cave job went on for a long time he really would have to do something about the irrigation. Sarah was bound to want to see what he was doing sooner or later. If she found he had been buying blasting powder for another treasure hunt, there was no telling what she might do. He remembered with an inward squirming the lash of her words that other time, maybe seven years ago.

"You're no better than your pappy or your grandpappy, Matt Lamar. Always poking around in holes and hollow trees like they did, lookin' for treasure. What's got into you? You won't work, you won't farm, you just sit or go traipsin' off in the cedar brakes after gold. Nobody comes to see us any more. We're too worthless. I'm a-telling you, I'm a patient woman, but if it happens again, I'm a-leaving!"

It had happened again, many times, in a mild way, and Sarah never had left. But this was different. This might take months.

The mouth of the cave challenged him. The blocks of granite were wedged tight in defiance of mortal hands. He knew until he got more tools he was going to have to use pure leverage.

He got a heavy cedar pole and began to test the solidity of the piled-up boulders. With the knowledge of long practice, he found the weak spot in the mass. He braced himself, got a steady footing and began to pry on the key boulder. Slowly it began to move, to rise. He pushed downward on the cedar pole with all his might. The boulder tilted, balanced, fell to the left onto the ground. Two others slid a little, there was a faint patterning of debris falling down through the cracks into the cave.

The one effort left him breathless. He walked down to the Yancy and got a drink. The stream ran over solid granite here, the water completely clear. He noticed there was a slide only a few feet from the cave itself; a slide that evidently had been the source of the rocks piled into the opening.

In the nearby cliff was a large bat cave he had seen many times before. It extended back into the semi-darkness about 80 feet.

Still breathing heavily, he went back to the job. Two more boulders finally yielded to his leverage after having been wrestled, propped up with smaller chunks of rock, and finally eased over the rim. He still could not see downward. Seemingly endless masses of stone defied him there.

By ten o'clock he was exhausted. Years of improper nutrition, years of indolence had drained him. His stomach felt all gone. His arms shook. His eyes were bloodshot. He knew he had to quit. Yet this was not even a start.

He hid the pick and started home with the rifle, dragging his feet. He wanted to lie down and sleep but he felt he must get back to the porch. Too long an absence at first might make Sarah suspicious. It occurred to him, too, that he must kill something to make his story about hunting plausible. He shot the first cotton-tail he saw. Even it seemed too heavy to carry, but he made the effort for the sake of appearances.

At the shack, he handed Sarah the rabbit and lay down on the porch. When he awoke it was late afternoon, and his mind was racing. His muscles ached, his back was awry and he was hungry, but a scheme seemed to have come full-blown into his brain. He stared at the scheme, stood off and looked at it, dissected it. There it was, sound and peart and reasonable. He decided if he was going to waste some of the blasting powder at the Yancy and start a dam, he might as

well really divert the water and plant something. A field of green stuff might convince Sarah more than anything he could say to her. If it grew well, the mere fact of its growing would relieve him of further responsibility. He could spend more and more time at the cave.

First he thought only of corn. That was quick, easy and impressive. Then he began to wonder about more blasting powder. It would take money. There weren't any more cedar logs cut. He wondered about putting some squash and tomatoes between the rows of corn. If the water was going to be running down there anyway, it might as well be producing a quick money vegetable crop too.

He groaned as he tried to get up. The thought of hard labor was all right, but the execution was more painful than he remembered. He got a drink at the well and went in to the inevitable corn pone and fried rabbit. After supper, he fell into bed. He knew he must get up by five.

At the Yancy in the morning, he drove his muscles into action. They rebelled. His arms kinked, there was a cramp in his right leg. Still he forced himself to walk, to bend, to lift. The Yancy was maybe two feet deep here, twelve wide, running through banks of earth impregnated with boulders. He figured he could pile boulders across the stream, dig and blast a diversion ditch big enough to take part of the flow around the site and back into the streambed farther down until he could make the dam tight with small stones, poles, clay and earth.

He began the diversion ditch with an old shovel, starting back a few feet from the intake, so as to cut through that part last. He tried to race through the work. It was impossible. He puffed and groaned for half an hour, making a hole around a boulder that had to be blown up and moved.

Then he could resist the cave no longer. He tramped over to it, already tired out but buoyed up by his interest. He must get ready to blast the remaining chunks of granite. They were either too large or too far down to handle with the lever.

He sized up the biggest one, and picked a spot on it for the powder hole. Then he began chipping and drilling. The chisel hurt his hands, the rock drill was cold to the tender skin beneath the broken blisters. He saw drops of his blood mix with the flakes and dust of the tough granite.

"I'm goin' through, damn you!" he said to the granite as a personal adversary.

He lasted until eleven o'clock. The dent in the rock was hardly noticeable, but he carefully put a smaller

stone over it as a disguise in case hunters came along. Even in his exhaustion he was hungry. He decided the first thing he was going to plant between the corn was turnips; then he'd kill a wild pig and have pork and greens. He needed nourishing vittles to keep up this pace. . . .

Five days later he was ready for the first blast. The powder hole was deep and clean and true, even though his hands were raw red masses of shattered blisters and lacerations. He poured in and tamped the powder, caulked it, cut off the fuse two feet from the charge, picked his route to run, and lighted the fuse.

From behind a cedar forty feet away he heard the deep boom of black powder, heard the shattering fragments fly. He relished the thick hot acrid smell of the smoke as he ran to see the result. The main boulder was well shattered. He began throwing out the pieces he could handle and saw that one of the other main blocks was cracked. It was a good start. But it made him realize the enormous extent of the task.

On the way home he set off a smaller charge, stingily spared from his cave supply, for the dam diversion ditch. The obstructing boulder broke up enough to be moved later. He at least had an exhibit of his useful work if Sarah happened to investigate.

DAILY, as the summer advanced, he rose earlier, keeping pace with the sun or outdoing it in his zeal to be at the cave. Sarah was curious, but still too apathetic to inquire into his long absences. She sat on the porch, fanning, or stretched on the bed wearily reading the magazines her mother sometimes gave her.

Matt began to measure time by milestones at the cave and at the dam. It was in late May that he got the idea of irrigating a small garden from the diversion ditch, which now was done, while he completed the dam. In six weeks he had greens and lettuce and a good start on tomatoes. In June he got in two acres of corn for late roasting ears and maybe a little chicken feed. He was thinking more and more in terms of vittles as his stamina increased and his muscles hardened. His hands were healed now, with thick calluses over the scars.

It was in mid-June, too, that the first rattler came out of the depths of the cave. Matt was down about seven feet now, with no sign yet of the hole turning inward toward the cliff. The rattler was there one morning, coiled on top of the boulder he was drilling. It evidently could not get up the almost-sheer sides of the cave now that he had removed so much of the top layers. He killed the snake, but all

the rest of the day as he continued drilling he imagined he heard rattlings and buzzings below; and he kept looking behind him to make sure no evil heads were coming up to strike him.

Finally, he almost got used to them and the inevitable daily chore of killing a new batch and throwing them outside. He was sure he had the biggest collection of rattles in Lampasas County. One of the snakes, with thirteen rattles and a button, was nearly seven feet long and as thick as his leg. By August he figured he had them under control; he had killed sixty-seven.

The irrigated corn was flourishing. During the long hours of slow drilling and heaving and pulling on the ropes of his bucket hoist, he was planning for the next spring. He was thinking about turkeys now. There was always a good market in Austin. If he got the poult in late March or April, and put in a lot of early corn, he ought to be able to fatten them up for Thanksgiving and Christmas. But he would have to build a varmint-tight, roofed stockade to keep the coyotes and skunks from killing them. In October, he started the stockade, stealing time from the cave to cut and haul cedar poles for uprights and roof.

He was hungry nearly all the time now. He even wanted butter for his roasting ears. He wanted ham and eggs. He cut extra cedar logs and hauled them to town, and with the money bought an old Jersey, a dozen hens and a rooster, and a sow with pigs, even though it cut him a little short on his blasting powder. Sarah got out the brown churn that hadn't been used for years, and for the first time he noticed a little color in her wan cheeks and the hint of a spring in her step.

To cut down on feed for the cow during the long dry spell that was gripping West Texas and ruining the natural range, he carried his irrigation project farther than he had intended. He ran a stake and rider fence around two acres near the house, cross-fenced a half acre for barley, oats and vetch as a quick grazing crop, planted the other acre and a half in pasture grass, built a dike around the whole area, and flooded it. When the pasture came up and he had plenty of feed he traded a load of poles for a plow horse, ancient but still sound and usable.

He still was starting in to work at sun-up but now he was keeping at it till sundown. There never seemed to be enough hours in the day. He was lean and hard, with not an ounce of fat on him. His face, despite the many hours spent underground, was a mahogany tan from his labors on

the dam and in the field. His arms were tough and muscled from climbing up and down the hoist ropes in the cave.

By November, he surmised he was nearing the bottom of the vertical part of the cave and that it soon must turn horizontal.

Despite his eagerness to be at the digging, he took six days off for two projects. For years he had known of two wild pecan trees on the Colorado, near the mouth of the Yancy in some of the wildest country along the river. The nuts were large and thin-shelled, and he knew they would bring a premium price in Austin. Nearby was the biggest bee tree he had ever seen. Loading up old Billy the horse with gunny sacks and buckets and a small camp outfit, he went after pecans and honey.

IT required four round trips, but he came out of the cedar brakes with 900 pounds of pecans that he had threshed and culled himself, and 200 pounds of fine clear comb honey. This was going to provide the money for the turkeys. He even allowed himself the luxury of some Bull Durham in place of the bitter home-grown Texas tobacco he had been smoking.

Sarah greeted him eagerly on his return.

"I've been lonesome," she said.

He looked at her. She was gaining a little weight from the milk and better food. Her eyes were clear instead of clouded. She spoke with a new interest in life.

"How long you had that old wrapper?" he asked suddenly.

"You ought to know," she said. "Just as long as we've been married. Ten years."

"Ten years," he repeated. "How old are you, Sarah?"

"Don't you remember that! I was sixteen and you were twenty-one."

He shook his head.

"Twenty-six? Let's hitch up and go to Lampasas tomorrow. I'm goin' to get you a new dress."

That was a milestone, too. Others came rapidly as the winter and the next spring rolled by. All winter, Matt worked at a double project, the treasure cave and the bat cave in the nearby cliff. Every day he spent some time gathering and sacking the guano that lay in a three-foot deep layer all the way back in the bat cave, the accumulation of centuries. Every day he made two trips to the best twelve acres of the irrigated land and spread the guano. That meant two hundred pounds of rich fertilizer a day, a ton every ten days, three tons a month. By spring the land was saturated with nitrates.

The turkey stockade was ready, a rugged structure that could have with-

stood the assaults of a grizzly bear, and certainly the puny raids of any coyotes.

As he lay or stood in the treasure cave each day, chipping, hammering, blasting, hauling out the rock, disposing of the fragments, he wondered how it was going to feel to have the gold and silver. . . .

Early in the spring he started plowing. His program was clear in his mind: Ten acres of corn in the fertilized field with four acres more in a poorer patch where he had had no time to carry bat guano; yams, squash, tomatoes, peppers, turnips and a few other table vegetables in the remaining two acres of the fertilized land.

He bought 400 baby turkeys and enough grain to tide them over until he got his own. He let them range in the pasture by day and shut them up at night. He found he was limited to about four hours a day in the cave. He chafed at the delay but he knew he must keep up his appearance of farming so Sarah would not suspect how he was using the rest of his time.

One day around the first of May, more than a year after he had found the bottle, he went home before noon to get the horse. Sarah was in the yard, digging in the earth. He stopped in amazement. She was planting geraniums.

"Cousin Horace sent them to me from California," she explained. "I thought I'd spruce the place up a little."

He noticed the animation in her face and saw that she, too, was getting a little brown from the sun.

"You look mighty pretty when you smile," he offered. She colored, then went on planting geraniums.

THAT fall, the turkey market was good. Matt made more than he expected, even though he held back Big Boy, his prize gobbler, and twenty hens for breeding stock. A wild idea came to him, something to surprise Sarah.

The evening when he came back from Austin he drove into the lane in a Model T that sent the astounded doves caroming away with a screaming of wings.

"It's second hand," he told Sarah, "but it runs like lightning."

She could only blink. Then she cried a little. Matt took her in his arms to reassure her. She was soft and her shoulders were round again. She clung to him. . . .

He redoubled his efforts in the cave. At forty feet down it had turned inward as he had anticipated. Now he was encountering the really big boulders. And he could hear buzzings way back in the darkness. He knew he had never cleared out all the rat-tiers. . . .

WORDLY WISE



FLASH IN THE PAN

American frontiersmen hunted game under conditions that would baffle most modern sportsmen. Their greatest handicap was the inefficiency of the crude flintlock guns. When the trigger was snapped, friction between steel and flint might produce a spark—and it might not.

Even a strong spark did not guarantee that the gun would fire. It was equipped with a shallow "pan," in which a trail of powder led from the flint to the charge. Dampness or rough handling frequently broke the thin line of powder. In such cases, there was a flare of light from the powder in the pan, but the gun did not fire.

Such a *flash in the pan* was so common an occurrence that the term came to stand for any quick and dazzling failure.

—Webb Garrison

During the winter he replenished his field with bat guano and cleared a new piece of ground for spring plowing. The neighbors were beginning to stop by and chat about his plans. His corn had made seventy bushels to the acre on the good land, something never heard of in this part of Texas.

He dug and dug with a dogged mania for speed. He and the granite fought a bitter fight each day down there in the cave, lighted only by the flickering candles casting weird distorted shadows on the dark walls as the rattlers hissed and rasped in the far darkness.

ON a brilliant day in late April the second year he came up out of the blackness and blinked in the sunlight. It was time to go home to supper and the chores. He filled his lungs with the air, the grand spiced air coming in from all the far reaches of the Colorado stretching out there before him.

He felt young again. He started walking home, lithe and sure-footed. He recalled vividly how he had dragged home with the rabbit weighting him down that first morning. He was a lot nearer the treasure now, the shining yellow gold and the sparkling silver.

In the yard, he noticed the red flash of Sarah's geraniums and the multi-colored beauty of the nasturtiums she had added around the porch steps. He didn't get to sit on the porch much nowadays, except on Sundays when neighbors dropped by; something they hadn't done for years, until his success with the corn and turkeys.

He bounded up the steps. Sarah came to the door and kissed him.

The smell of good food—steak, potatoes, greens with bacon, an apple pie—came to him. He put his arms around her.

"Matt. . . ."

"Yes, Sarah."

"We're going to have a baby."

He let her go and reached behind him, grasped the rawhide tilt-em-back chair and sat down weakly. He stared at her. The thought came to him, something we never expected, a boy to hunt and fish, to teach about the woods, to grow the best corn in the county.

He rose, picked her up and carried her to a chair. Then he got down on his knees and put his head in her lap. She stroked his hair, the back of his sunburned neck. They had no need of words.

But the next day he felt he must celebrate.

He raced through the morning work, cranked the Model T and headed for Lampasas.

He drove along conscious only of a

new joy in sights and sounds and smells. He noticed with fresh appreciation the carpeting of the bluebonnets amid the scrub oaks and cedars. He watched a road runner's antics, smiling at its darting gait and soaring leaps. He smiled down at the deep green water of Sulphur Creek, lazy in light and shadow. He sniffed the pungent odor of the cedar leaves giving forth their elusive perfume under the massage of the sun's rays.

At his brother Ed's store he found half a dozen farmers and cowmen drinking Dr. Pepper or root beer and talking about the dry year.

"Ol' Matt doesn't have to worry, though," chafed Ollie Sparks from up at Nix. "He's got Yancy Creek all corralled for himself."

He realized they were joking with him. They were noticing him. There was good-humored raillery in their eyes.

"Well, I'm the lowest down user there is on that ol' creek, so who's going to stop me?" he replied.

They laughed and slapped their legs, and he knew he had made a joke.

"What you in town for?" asked his brother Ed, tying up a packet of corn meal.

"Vittles," he said.

"Eatin' mighty high these days, ain't you, Matt?" asked Ollie. "Them turkeys was sure beauties."

"I'm tryin' to get better ones this year."

He felt as if he wanted to celebrate though he was too shy to tell about the baby, even to his brother Ed. He walked around the little crowded store looking at the shelves, peering into the smudged candy case. First, he picked out a lace-trimmed nightgown. Then he remembered Sarah used to like gumdrops when they were courting.

He bought twenty-five cents worth, a huge sack of the garishly-colored, sugar-sprinkled candy.

The ranchers were talking about the threat to the range from the drought, about the way they were going to have to scratch to make a living. He half-listened as he surveyed the shelves. He bought some fancy canned goods, a slab of cheese, some veal chops and a lot of staples.

From force of habit, he got twenty pounds of blasting powder.

"If things git too bad I'm goin' to git me a pick and go prospecting," Ollie was saying. "Might be a little gold around here somewhere."

"Natural or treasure?" somebody asked.

This got a laugh.

"No treasure for me," said Ollie. "I ain't lookin' for no rainbows."

"Reminds me of what a feller did out in California," cut in Johnnie McCrea who had traveled around a

lot. "Ol' Pegleg Smith was s'posed to have found a whole mountain top of gold back in the 1800's. Everybody out there hunts for the lost Pegleg Mine. Well, this feller I knew out by Indio got hold of a dozen wooden legs, and planted them all over the whole danged desert. From then on, the tenderfeet come bustin' into town every few months with a wooden leg and start filin' claims, thinkin' they've really found Pegleg's bonanza."

"Don't have to go to California for that," drawled Fats Waldrup from Lometa. "My grandaddy pulled the same kind of stunt right here. Only it was a bottle. He got an old blue bottle and fixed up a treasure note about Injuns and jack loads of silver and gold and planted it out somewhere in the Devil's Gut. At least, that's what he told me; I never seen it. Guess nobody's ever found it yet."

"Kinda mean, warn't it?" asked Ollie.

"Grandpa had a funny sense of humor, all right," agreed Fats. "But ain't no harm done. I guess it's layin' out there yet."

In a few minutes, somebody said, "Where's Matt?"

"Done cut out for home, I guess. He works all the time."

"Well, I'll be dang'd," said Matt's brother Ed. "He forgot his blastin' powder. First time that ever happened."

AT the little rickety bridge over Yancy, Matt got out of his old Ford and looked down at the water flowing over the gravel and boulders. The sun was already down. A pink glow silhouetted Sugar Loaf Mesa and cast a faint reflection on the miles of cedar brakes stretching toward the far Colorado. It was warm. A little breeze was coming up from the south, with just a hint of cedar on the wing.

From his pocket Matt took the blue bottle. It had never left him since he picked it up on a day that now seemed so long ago. He peered at the bottle, at the rolled-up brownish paper inside. He looked over toward his own fertile acres, at the little dam diverting the irrigation water. From the stockade beyond the field came the raucous gobble-gobble of old Big Boy. He could see two of his new heifers moving in the pasture. It reminded him of his tasks.

He leaned over the bridge railing and aimed carefully. The blue bottle dropped on a granite boulder and shattered into a hundred slivers. The brown paper bobbed away toward the Colorado and oblivion.

Matt Lamar got back in his car beside the big sack of gumdrops and drove on, in the warm twilight past his own land, toward home and the real treasures of Yancy Creek. •



■ By GEORGE SCULLIN

The Man Behind The Caine Mutiny

Bright young men who think the days of starting at the bottom are over might take a quick look at Stanley Kramer, Hollywood's most successful young producer.

Stanley started as a janitor.

Along about the time a sea story called "The Caine Mutiny" was selling its three-millionth copy, some of the less astigmatic Hollywood soothsayers were foreseeing the day when it would become a best seller, and consequently eligible for consideration as a movie possibility. In anticipation of this happy event, they approached the author of the lengthy tome, one Herman Wouk by name, only to discover that he already had acted with unseemly haste. Unfamiliar with things Hollywood, such as barrels of gold, he had sold his movie rights to the first man to come along. Not to help matters at all,

the man in this case happened to be a one-time scene shifter, carpenter, and sweeper-upper named Stanley Kramer.

Worse still, this man Kramer was a hard one to get to listen to reason, or the Hollywood conception of reason. During the war he had got enough experience making training and orientation films to come out with the rank of first lieutenant, and the exalted position, right up where he could look at the brass, seemed to have gone to his head.

A few die-hards, still happily living in the good old days when Hollywood had a way of dealing with obstreperous ex-looeys, thought they could bring the boy around. Speaking paternally, but withal firmly, for the boy's own good, they pointed out to him that "The Caine Mutiny" had in its 494 pages the germ of a BIG picture, that given the full Hollywood treatment such as a new script, a real U.S. Navy Destroyer Minesweeper from the mothball fleet, some really gorgeous dolls to build up the sex angle, and some fancy sets, they might be able to bring it off for about three million bucks.

"But you see, Stanley," they said in effect, "to make a BIG picture, you gotta have BIG money, BIG ideas, and BIG names."

Stanley allowed as how he had heard some legends to that effect. He also allowed as how he thought he could save some script fees by sticking to the book pretty much as was. He thought he could save some more by using only one girl instead of a chorus of beauties, and pare costs still further by using some unknown instead of an expensive star.

ABOUT that time something like frost began to glitter in the balmy California air, and Kramer began using strange words like honesty, integrity, and sincerity. He began talking of using, not *one* modified World War I destroyer, but of enlisting the cooperation of the whole U.S. Navy. He mentioned sums of money that added up, not to three million, but to six. He talked of ideas so big that they totalled up, not to a BIG picture, but to THE PICTURE of the decade.

Somewhat chagrined, the moguls went away, but not in defeat. Rather, they went in relief, as though escaping from some harrowing action in the violent ward of the local looney bin, convinced that Kramer's plans totalled up to nothing more than complete insanity.

As for Kramer, he sat there for a moment watching, in his dreams, the U.S. Navy sweep across the Pacific in battle array, watching the U.S.S. *Caine* stagger through the most terrific typhoon ever to sweep away the Philippine Islands, watching the dis-

integration of a man named Queeg and the emergence as a man of a jazz playing pianist named Willie Keith. Then he tossed aside the fleet, the Pacific Ocean, the typhoon, and the six million dollars, and returned to reality.

He had a real picture to make on a real set. It was the only set he had, and it had to do for a whole picture. It consisted of some walls enclosing one bed. But all the members of the cast were ready for him when he arrived. Both of them.

That was a couple of years ago, and the Kramer mutiny against most of the sacred cows of Hollywood tradition was in full swing. So you couldn't make a picture using only one set and a cast of two characters? "The Four Poster," based on the Broadway play of the same name by Jan de Hartog, and starring Rex Harrison and his wife, Lilli Palmer, is still the delight of the critics and the public alike.

So the guy who makes light, sophisticated, bedroom comedies can't make fast-shooting Westerns? A thing from the Kramer cameras called "High Noon," starring Gary Cooper, knocked so many Oscars off the shelf at the Academy Award dinner that it looked like Annie Oakley night in the shooting gallery.

So a guy who makes successful Westerns can't develop the light touch so essential for the production of fantasies? A beautiful bit of beguilement called "The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T," and starring a nine-year-old boy and a piano as big as a football field, is currently bewitching the required millions of movie-goers, plus their small fry, who help so much in keeping Hollywood swimming pools in repair.

So a guy who makes bedroom comedies, Westerns, fight pictures like "The Champion," fantasies, and such assorted hits as "Home of the Brave," "The Men," "Cyrano de Bergerac," "Death of a Salesman," "The Happy Time," and the violent, shocking "The Wild One," can't get off a real epic of the sea like "The Caine Mutiny?"

At this moment the critics haven't had their say about "The Caine Mutiny," but the U.S. Navy, always slightly more than dour about the Hollywood conception of life on the bounding main, is inclined to think that the former first lieutenant from the Army Signal Corps is its boy. To help him along, they put at his disposal everything it owned below the sea, on the sea, and above it. Buckets, tubs, and majestic aircraft carriers; submarines, helicopters, and fighting planes; expert advice, technical advice, and volunteered advice.

As for the results, the movie soothsayers who like to predict the success or failure of a picture after the box office returns are in, are hedging their predictions only to the extent of saying that, while it unquestionably is the greatest picture of the decade, it might not be the greatest of all time.

About the only thing that failed to click on schedule for Kramer during the shooting of "The Caine Mutiny" was the typhoon. This meteorological lack of cooperation forced Kramer to make his own typhoon, a stunt he pulled with such intensity that it all but caused storm warnings to be posted the length of the Pacific coast. Veteran salts, assigned to the picture as technical advisers, watched the studio tempest for one long session, and then marched off for chow at Chasen's, sturdily matching their rolling steps to the violent pitching of Sunset Boulevard. Others with less experience just braced their feet on the solid, motionless studio floor and got seasick.

ALL of which brings up the fine point of just who is this Kramer guy, anyway?

It is not a new question. For some eight years now Kramer has been trying to answer it himself, usually for the benefit of bankers who can't understand why he wants another million dollars when they already are foreclosing on the mortgage on his old hock.

Well, to begin with, Kramer is an old-fashioned boy who firmly believes in such obsolete virtues as hard work, perseverance, and attention to such details as count. There. That beginning is based on an old newspaper theory that when you've got a story to tell that sounds like a lie, get the biggest part of it off first and then hope for the best.

The record has it that Kramer was born in New York City in 1913, to a family, including uncles and aunts, that knew more than a little about the distribution of such cinematic marvels as "The Perils of Pauline," "The Birth of a Nation," and the frantic doings of the Keystone cops. And it is also a matter of record that, while Kramer spent his first four years doing little or nothing, another picture man named Adolph Zukor was using the same years to go from broke to the head of a \$25,000,000 enterprise called Paramount Famous Players-Lasky Corporation. Caught short at the beginning, Kramer was a long time in catching up.

Handicapped by having no poverty to combat, and lacking the advantages of a Lower East Side, Shadow-of-the-Brooklyn Bridge environment, he grew up in normal fashion. Even his records at New York's DeWitt Clinton

High School were painfully normal, but he did sort of cut loose once he got to college. He went to New York University, and though little ivy clings to its soot-grimed walls down on lower Fifth Avenue, it turns out a scholastic product that stands up pretty well just about everywhere. Among the intense and earnest students who seek learning there, Stanley Kramer was just a little bit more intense and earnest except on his typewriter. Let the others worry about social changes and the psychological effects of the Big Depression and bathtub gin. He used his "younger-generation-gone-to-hell" spirit to rip off some hilarious, biting satires for the N.Y.U. *Medley*, the university's monthly humorous sheet.

As a result of these literary indiscretions, which were enough to disqualify him with any serious newspaper, he escaped the grim fate that awaited college graduates who emerged to face the cold light of reality in 1933. With their diplomas clutched in their hands, they marched off to join the ranks of WPA. Kramer marched off to Hollywood and 90 bucks a week as a junior writer at Fox. Somebody had read his *Medley* copy, and thought he had the stuff.

Now the paths of Kramer and Adolph Zukor begin to merge again. Twenty years after the birth of Paramount and the birth of Kramer, both were in Hollywood, but it cannot be said that Adolph Zukor was visibly shaken by the appearance of a rival. He had even less reason to worry a few weeks later.

Kramer, plowing into his script writing chores, discovered there was a vast difference between college humor and professional screen writing, even though movie critics continued to insist that the products of both were identical. Quick as he was to discover his shortcomings, his bosses were quicker, and abruptly the day arrived when he became a writer without portfolio. Looking over the unemployment situation from the corner of Hollywood and Vine, young Kramer came to the conclusion that job hunting under a warm sun had many advantages over job hunting through the slush and ice of New York City. Furthermore, by deciding to cast his lot with Hollywood, he would have no embarrassing explanations to make at home concerning his signal failure to set the film capital on fire during his first fling.

It cannot be said of Kramer that he sat around waiting for opportunity to knock. Having determined to become a movie man, he set out grimly to become one. He was handsome enough to become an actor, with black, curly hair, a strong profile, and the stocky, athletic build of a fast quarterback, but when he observed

that the breadlines and the lines in front of Central Casting bore a striking resemblance to each other, right down to the last bit player, he abandoned that side of picture making. And since producers and directors seemed to be in long supply, he saved his strength in that direction for a big push later. Slowly he worked his way through the list of studio job possibilities, typically starting at the top, and working his way down. At the very bottom he found his job; he became a sweeper-upper, on the midnight-to-dawn shift, at \$22 a week, so far back on the lot that the only actors he saw were the horses used in Westerns.

The education of Stanley Kramer was begun. He learned just how much mud an extra could track across a clean stage after a California rain. He learned how much dust a female star with a long gown could be counted on to pick up, and how much he would have to sweep up himself. In time, as he advanced to carpenter's helper, he learned just how many boards, and how many nails in each board, went into the making of a set. In still more time he learned just how many miles of wire went into lighting a set, just how frayed a cable could get before it knocked you clear across the stage, the names of the hundreds of lamps that are a part of the intricate art of stage lighting, and just which fuses could be trusted to blow out in the middle of a critical scene. By the end of a year, thanks to his acute powers of observation, he could build a set, light it, and scrub the floor himself.

He was ripe for his next move, this one to the research department of MGM. There, while concerned with

the mechanics of George Washington's false teeth, the type of cutlass worn by Captain Kidd, the color of the horse used by Robert E. Lee, and how many men were killed the day Old 97 missed the trestle on White Oak Mountain, he formed a tremendous respect for the thousands of details that must be considered in the creation of an honest, authentic film. He also discovered that, while one could devote an academic lifetime to the research of things past, library work in itself made no pictures.

He wanted to make pictures. Already he had been deeply stirred by the efforts of a few producers and directors to make good pictures—pictures that would be both artistic and box office successes. He was also aware of a competitive spirit in Hollywood that could be mighty stimulating if your immediate competitor did not get his knife into your back first. He knew it, and he liked it, and he must have felt pretty much as did John Huston, another producer-director of honesty and integrity, when he said admiringly of Hollywood: "It's the jungle, and it harbors an industry that's one of the biggest in the country. A closed-in, tight, frantically-inbred, and frantically-competitive jungle. And the rulers of the jungle are predatory, fascinating, and tough."

Still too young to make pictures himself, Kramer did the next best by getting a job as a film cutter. If he couldn't shoot the stuff, he could at least cut the heart out of the stuff shot by his betters. He was there for three long years, and if it is true that more than a few faces ended up on his cutting room floor, it is equally true that the survivors benefited from his uncanny ability to fit scenes together



Hollywood laughed when Stanley Kramer began to produce "The Caine Mutiny." They foresaw Navy objections. Yet, here's Kramer, right, with star Humphrey Bogart and Navy brass.

with brilliant timing. Along with his ability to heighten the dramatic intensity of the scenes, he developed a keen ear for background sound effects, be it the chirp of a distant cricket, an airplane's roar, or a symphonic orchestra in full blast.

He came to feel, and still does, that cutting is the essence of picture making. In fact, he became so critical of the miles of film he had to cut out, and so fluent in his assertions that most of it could be avoided by using a good shooting script to begin with, that his superiors turned him loose on a script just to shut him up.

Now he was a writer again, but the boy writing scripts for short subjects at MGM was not the brash college wit who had first come to Fox in 1933. Now when he thought of a scene, he saw the floor in terms of the number of square feet that had to be mopped. He saw the walls in terms of nails, boards and gallons of paint. He saw a candle-lighted scene in terms of a battery of trick lamps, and he saw each bit of period furniture through the critical eyes of a research man. As for the shooting script itself, he saw most of the film on the cutting-room floor, so he pencilled that out in advance and wrote only those parts that would end up in the finished film. It was a radical departure from accepted techniques, but it worked.

There was some mild talk of his being a boy wonder, but it didn't spread very far. At least no one seemed anxious to turn him loose on a million-dollar script; so he wrote his own. When he sold it to Columbia, he left MGM in high hopes of at last becoming another David Wark Griffith. Instead, Columbia gave him a few chores on some low-budget pictures, and seemed to be quite indifferent as to what he did with his time between assignments. Undaunted, he turned to writing for radio.

Radio turned out to be a film cutter's dream. No lights to worry about, no costumes, no make-up, no props, not even any sets. Just sounds and disembodied voices. Kramer sailed in wide open, and in very little time he was writing for Lux Radio Theater, for Rudy Vallee, for Edward G. Robinson and a flock of others.

Envious friends can point to what happened next as a typical Kramer "break." One of his radio dramas caught the ear of a story editor at MGM, Kramer was hailed as a bright new discovery, and back he went to his former boss as a full-fledged screen writer assigned to work up a shooting script from his own radio play.

Today, as a producer of proven hits, Kramer says, "A good share of Hollywood's trouble today can be traced to too many pictures about absolutely

nothing." He has reached that conclusion the hard way. Back in 1940, at the mature age of 27, his was not to reason why stories were bought, including his own; his was but to do or die. He strove mightily, and nearly did die professionally, but from this experience he developed a whole new concept of what constitutes a good screen play.

"It's very simple," he explains. "Whenever I am considering a story or a script, I just ask myself, 'Why do you want to make this picture?' If the answer is, 'Because you are in the picture-making business and you can't turn down everything,' I turn it down. A picture has to say something. Above all, it has to be able to explain why I want to make it. I don't mean that it has to carry a great message that will save the world, and I don't mean that it has to be pure entertainment, carrying no message. I mean it has to have something that says, 'I'm a picture you'll like.' When it says that, I want to make it. Maybe it will turn out that I'm the only person in the world who does like it, but I'm willing to take that chance."

Well, he has proved his point; but, to go back to 1940, he was just as honest and sincere then as he is today, but his point was a long way from being proven. For a time he was faced with learning the hard facts of life, the main one being that a large studio geared for enormous production has to produce enormously, if for no other reason than that it must keep thousands of employees employed, keep thousands of theaters supplied with film, keep hundreds of banks solvent, and keep swimming pools watered well above the low-tide mark. Kramer regards with genuine awe the staggering miles of celluloid that are required to feed the thousands of projectors in thousands of movie houses that comprise the motion picture industry's market.

Considering that the average feature film is well over a mile long, that double features are the rule rather than the exception, and that the bills change three and four times a week at the neighborhood houses and drive-ins, the mere mechanics of distributing that much film becomes a fantastic problem, without the added complication of seeing that the film contains a good picture.

To the exhibitors' howls that the pictures stank, a desperate industry hopefully suggested that stinking pictures were better than no pictures at all, and kept the cameras rolling to turn out quantity rather than quality. Kramer rolled right along, too, his mind fixed on quality production, but not ignoring the experience to be gained in quantity production. Time after time he saw ways of improving



Typical of the cooperation Kramer received from the Navy is this destroyer, loaned to the movie company by the Navy and used to represent the *Caine* in all exterior shots for the film.

the quality without reducing the quantity, and as he became more vocal, a few bosses began to find words of wisdom in what they had previously regarded as the mouthings of a fresh young brat. David Loew picked him out for training in direction and production, and, by the time World War II rolled around, Kramer had risen to become associate producer of the excellent "Moon and Sixpence," from the book of the same name by W. Somerset Maugham. Still only 29, he flashed briefly over the Hollywood firmament as "the boy wonder," and then plunged into the obscurity of the Army.

No drumbeaters ever extolled the merits of the films turned out by the training and orientation side of the Signal Corps, and the millions who saw them usually were lured before the screen by a direct command from a superior officer. Nevertheless, more high-class talent went into the making of those films than ever Hollywood could afford, and the results started a revolution in audio-visual education.

Released of the pressure of being "commercial," the ex-Hollywoodites, along with a scattering of men from the theater, radio, and a thing called video or television, let their imaginations rove through the fields of electronics, ballistics, first aid, prophylactics, and jungle survival. Hours of lectures on difficult subjects were reduced to thirty minutes of film, and greatly clarified in the process. By the time Lieutenant Kramer was ready to return to civilian life, he had lost all taste for commercial films.

Instead, quite clearly he saw in the future a shining Stanley Kramer Productions, and, jingling his discharge pay in his pocket, he went forth to vie in the movie world with the products of Paramount, Columbia, Warner Brothers, et al.

With him from the Army came a writer named Carl Foreman, and their combined enthusiasm was enough to lure into the enterprise a publicity man named George Glass. Into their combined hands fell one Willie Shenker, who had \$15,000 to invest—he thought—in a Chinese restaurant. A few hours later he found himself a Hollywood capitalist, but broke.

On the strength of the \$15,000, they were able to borrow \$30,000, and on the strength of that, plus determination, persuasiveness, and a charming innocence, they proceeded to finance a triumphant flop named "So This Is New York," starring radio's Henry Morgan.

No matter that their first picture was a financial failure. It was a picture. It was a product they could take to a bank and say, "Look, we did it! With some more of your money, we can do it again." Long before the

damaging box-office returns on their first film were in, they were off on their second. Their budget was too small for the production of a second-grade B picture, so they substituted brains for money.

Having no money for a star, they engaged Kirk Douglas, an actor whose name at that time was little known beyond his immediate family and circle of friends. To save time on the sets, where delays mount up at the rate of \$2,000 an hour, they rehearsed the cast over and over, hour after hour, in every move that had to be made and in every line that was to be spoken. Scenes, which in the normal course of movie production would end up on the cutting room floor, were cut out during rehearsal, and when at last the story, called "The Champion," was ready for shooting, it sped past the cameras in 23 days.

"The Champion" was to become a smash hit, but the returns were still a long way in the future when the banks looked at the woeful returns of "So This Is New York." George Glass and Carl Foremen were married men with family responsibilities, and they worried mightily as they stalled off the sheriff. Kramer, with nothing to

attach but his suitcase, dreamed on. He wanted to make a picture that would have something constructive to say about racial tolerance, a taboo theme in Hollywood. He wanted to do something about men left paralyzed by war wounds, a theme considered too morbid by Hollywood. As a researcher, he had looked deep into the story of Cyrano de Bergerac, and he thought Hollywood had yet to deal fairly with the man. He kept right on working, just as if he had money.

In the end, John Stillman, a Florida merchant, came to their financial rescue. Then "The Champion" hit the jackpot, and they were off. "Home of the Brave" passed before the cameras in 17 days; "The Men" in 23 days. And, despite the foreboding of others, they were solid hits. Above all, they were honest pictures, put together with a high degree of artistic integrity. Kramer's insistence upon quality rather than quantity was paying off.

Herman Wouk thought so when his book, "The Caine Mutiny," became a prize sought by most of the studios in Hollywood. The U. S. Navy thought so when it gave him full cooperation in the filming of its Pacific fleet. And the public thought so when, during the Hollywood doldrums, with movie-houses closing in droves every day and the rest playing to empty seats, it continued to give capacity business to "The Four Poster," "The Juggler," "High Noon," and others bearing the Kramer stamp.

Hollywood is fast adopting Kramer's method of cutting costs through rehearsals, and is beginning to look with approval at his rebellion against grinding out mass quantities of film just because the exhibitors had to have something to run to stay open. Instead of keeping the theaters open, the stinkers closed them, and not just temporarily, but permanently, in too many cases.

Still the rebel, Kramer recently took a look at the future of the motion picture industry, and decided that Hollywood was wrong again. "They talk about a movie market," he said recently, "but what do they mean? Do they mean the people who go to shows today? If so, we're in big trouble. That market is truly shrinking and has been for some years. To my way of thinking, the movie market is made up of millions of people who got bored by the old stuff, and the even more millions who can be intrigued by something new. You know, I don't think the movies ever scratched a tenth of their market, but I think it is time we started scratching."

Maybe no one else will follow his advice, but it's a cinch Kramer will. He's a scratcher from way back. •

any sore

that

does not heal

...is the first of the seven commonest danger signals that may mean cancer...but should always mean a visit to your doctor.

The other six danger signals are—
1 A lump or thickening, in the breast or elsewhere
2 Unusual bleeding or discharge
3 Any change in a wart or mole
4 Persistent indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
5 Persistent hoarseness or cough
6 Any change in normal bowel habits.

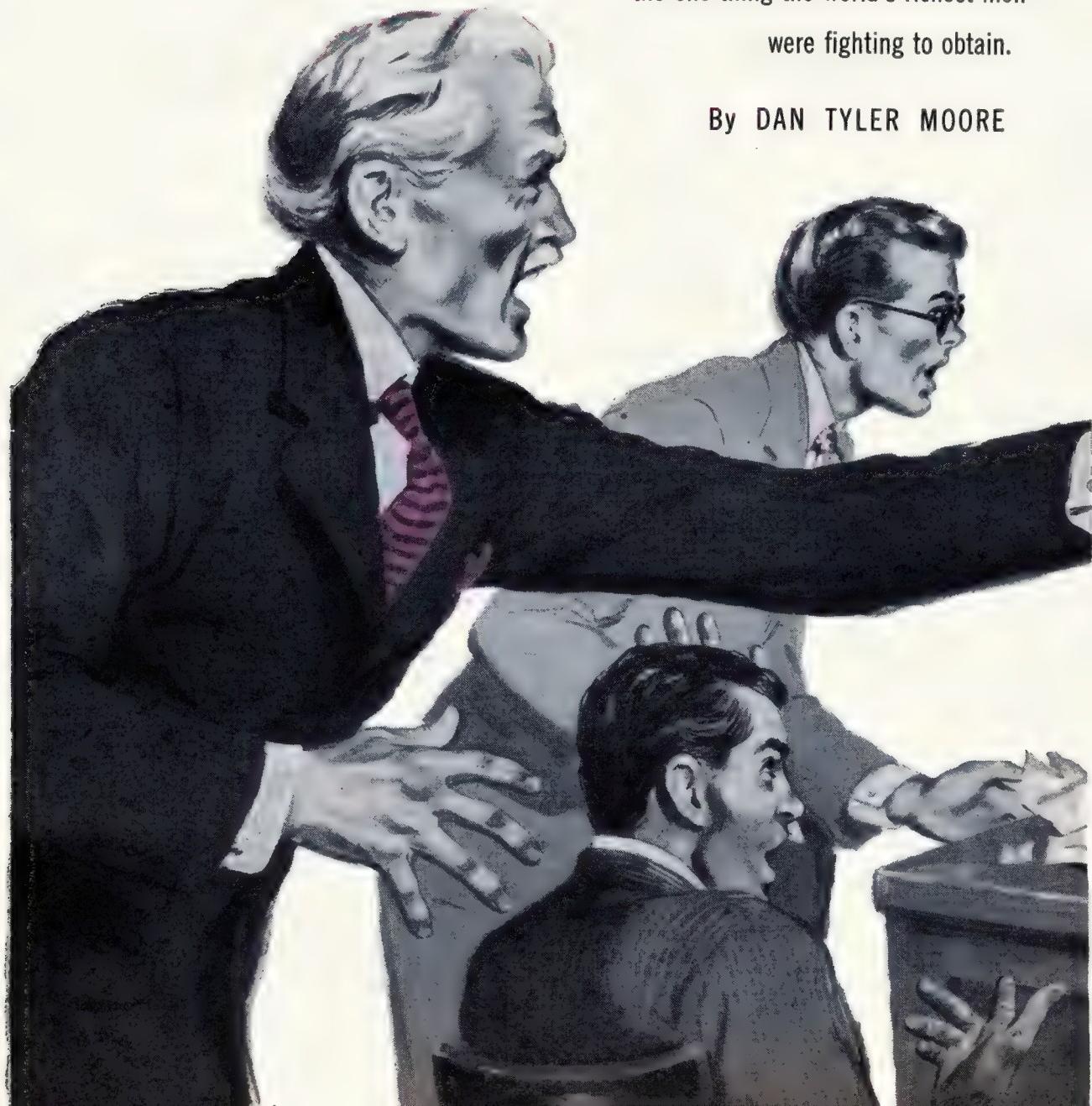
For other facts about cancer that may some day save your life, phone the American Cancer Society office nearest you, or write to "Cancer"—in care of your local Post Office.

American Cancer Society

THE BRITISH GUIANA MAGENTA

He was just an ordinary guy
with an ordinary job. But he owned
the one thing the world's richest men
were fighting to obtain.

By DAN TYLER MOORE



My wife knew the letter with the London post-mark could be from but one person: Leander Lewis, the world-renowned stamp dealer. I saw the wide, expectant look in her eyes as she leaned across the breakfast table.

"What does he say this time?"

"He says that one of his clients—the Shah of Iran, no less—will pay \$22,000 for my British Guiana Magenta."

I couldn't keep the satisfaction out of my voice. Harriet's mouth dropped open in delighted astonishment, then she sprang from her chair and rushed over to hug me.

"Darling, how wonderful! That just proves you've been right all the time to hold on to it. Twenty-two thousand dollars," she repeated, in an awed whisper, "for a little colored piece of paper!" Her fingers gripped my shoulders. "Why don't you answer him right away by cable?"

"It's less expensive to write," I said evenly, folding Lewis' heavy, watermarked notepaper, and thrusting it back into its envelope.

"But you don't have to worry about that now!" Suddenly Harriet's hands dropped to her sides. She stared at me in disbelief. "Don't tell me you aren't going to accept *this* offer?"

I shook my head.

"Why not," she cried, "when you know how much the money would mean to us. It could change our whole lives."

She glanced miserably around the crowded little kitchen of our crowded little apartment. "I simply cannot understand you! Why is it that you keep refusing to sell that stamp?"

The strained lines reappeared in her forehead and her mouth tightened.

I sighed. I knew we were in for the same old argument. It all had begun when I inherited my grandfather's stamp collection. Stamps had been his cherished hobby, and he had imparted his enthusiasm to me as soon as I was old enough to read. By the time I grew up, I had a good collection of my own, but nothing approaching his in completeness. It was one of my deepest regrets, however, that the old gentleman never realized he had the British Guiana Magenta. I had found it in an envelope of loose stamps apparently purchased during his last illness. Where he had bought the envelope, and how that unique stamp had gotten into it, was an unsolved mystery.

At any rate, as soon as the British Guiana Magenta was authenticated and I was known to be the owner, offers came pouring in. Leander Lewis was the leading contender.

In the beginning he offered \$10,000. I turned him down. Later, as the letters kept coming with higher offers, he had taken to telling me the names of the collectors he represented. I suppose he thought they would impress me.

They had, but not in the way Lewis hoped. Two members of the British Royal Family wanted my stamp; Caluste Gulbenkiam, of Portugal, the richest man in the world; an Indian Gaekwar; a Swedish munitions tycoon . . . I turned them all down.

Every time, I wrote with indescribable glee, refusing to sell, and, every time, Harriet, as she did now, thought I was out of my mind. We had been trying to save for years to buy a house of our own, but medical bills and various unexpected expenses had set



us back continually. Every offer from Leander Lewis brought the house within our reach, and yet I obstinately refused to part with the stamp. Harriet would be harsh with disappointment, then begging and tearful in turn. I had tried and tried to explain.

"Can't you possibly see the point, darling?" I would plead. "Here I am, Tom Kent, just an ordinary guy with an ordinary job in an office. We get along on what I make but I haven't set the world on fire. Nobody's ever heard of me. Yet, at the same time, I, Tom Kent, have something that the wealthiest and most powerful men in the world don't have—the British Guiana Magenta! Don't you see what that means to me?"

Of course, she didn't see. She argued with such female intensity that sometimes I was shaken myself. After all, I wanted a decent house of our own as much as Harriet did. In the years of our marriage, this was our only quarrel. I hated it, yet in the end that other feeling always won out—that secret triumphant feeling that I could not relinquish. To my friends, I might be just Tom Kent, but, in the circle of stamp collectors, I was envied and famous. After all, I owned the only British Guiana Magenta in existence.

The next day, I wrote a curt note to Leander Lewis, refusing the offer of the Shah of Iran. When I came home from the office Harriet was polite but distant. I loved her very much, and the fact that she was obviously deeply hurt filled me with guilt.

That night, as I worked over my albums, I came to a decision. When Leander's next letter came, I would sell the stamp. I consoled myself for my stubbornness with the thought that all the years I had hung on to it had increased the price I would finally get.

A FEW months later, I received a notice about a stamp auction at Small's, on Seventy-eighth Street. It indicated that a Great Britain one-penny of 1840 finally was to be put on the block. I knew there would be brisk bidding for it, and even though I couldn't afford to compete, I wanted to be there to savor the excitement.

When I reached Small's, on the Saturday of the auction, every seat was filled, and a crowd was standing at the back. After I had wedged myself into a place along a side wall, a young man beside me introduced himself as a reporter, and asked whether the auctions always drew so many people.

"Not usually," I told him, "but the Great Britain one-penny, which is to be put up today, is rather special. Probably most of the dealers and collectors in town are here."

"In town and out of town," the reporter replied. "I'm supposed to interview a dealer named Leander Lewis, who has flown all the way from London for this sale."

"By the way, which one is Lewis?" I asked him, with an attempted show of indifference.

The reporter pointed. "Over there on the aisle—in the dark flannel."

I stared, fascinated. Lewis was everything an elegant Britisher should be. He had a high-colored angular face, topped by a crest of thick gray hair. He wore a small clipped mustache, still dark, and his eyes were intelligent and piercing. I got the overall impression of an eagle, quick, wary, and formidable. This, then, was the man I had bested for several years. A surge of triumph went through me as I stood there, unnoticed, never taking my eyes off Leander Lewis.

Mr. Beedle, the auctioneer, hurriedly offered and sold some stamps of minor interest. Then he signaled to his assistant, who marched importantly to the platform, carrying a small cardboard box.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Beedle called, in his high pompous auctioneer's voice, "we now have a most unusual offering, a Great Britain One Penny of 1840. There are only 1,640 specimens of this stamp in existence."

Lewis' face was expressionless. Someone at the front of the room cautiously bid about half what the stamp was worth. Someone else upped him. The bidding grew brisk. The price climbed. There was not a sound out of Lewis. Finally, after a couple of dozen bids the stamp was sold. Lewis had not uttered a sound.

I was bewildered. If Leander Lewis had not come after the Great Britain One Penny, what had he come for? Was there something tremendous in the sale about which I had no knowledge? I was about to question the reporter at my side when I saw Beedle's assistant, accompanied by two uniformed guards, approaching the platform with another cardboard box. This was one covered with red wax seals. I was rigid with curiosity. My heart hammered in my chest. Beedle, who was a master showman and knew just how long to allow the tension to build, slowly broke the seals, under the eyes of the guards. Then he turned to the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to announce what is probably the most extraordinary offering ever handled by this firm." He paused. There was a dead silence in the room. "I have here a One-Cent British Guiana Magenta of 1856."

The reaction in the crowd was electric. There was a buzz of conversation, and shouts flashed back and

forth. I leaped forward. My eyes must have been blazing.

"Mr. Beedle," I roared. "Mr. Beedle! There is some mistake! I have the only British Guiana Magenta in existence, and it is in my safety deposit vault."

Beedle grinned broadly. "This stamp has been authenticated by Brownell himself. There is absolutely no question that it is authentic."

"Where was it found?" I demanded. Beedle shrugged. "We have no history on this stamp as yet."

"Who's offering the stamp for sale?"

"I am not at liberty to reveal that, Mr. Kent. All I can tell you is that its authenticity has positively been verified."

So it was genuine; there could be no doubt of that. When Beedle said a stamp was genuine, you knew it was.

SUDDENLY I felt as if I had been kicked in the stomach. My world had crashed. I looked at Leander Lewis. As he sat forward, holding ten fingers in the air, he seemed to be really an eagle, with talons about to strike.

Beedle acknowledged the gesture. "Mr. Lewis bids ten thousand dollars."

On the opposite side of the room another hand went up.

Beedle's voice rang out. "Mr. Radway bids fifteen thousand dollars."

Lewis upped that to seventeen-thousand-five-hundred. Beedle's eyes traveled to the last row:

"Mr. Ganz bids twenty thousand."

I watched, numb and stricken, as the three men kept up until the bid reached thirty thousand dollars. Then Radway dropped out. I saw Lewis make a quick gesture.

"Mr. Lewis bids thirty-five thousand!" Beedle called. Ganz dropped out.

All at once the blood unfroze in my veins. My brain was on fire. I began to calculate with lightning-like rapidity. My entire savings were a few thousand dollars in Government Bonds. I could borrow a few thousand more on my life insurance. My younger brother who had made a lucky fortune in Texas oil would lend me money. I could borrow from my employer. I could get an additional job auditing books at night.

I called out hoarsely and signaled to Beedle. His eyebrows shot up in puzzled astonishment. I signaled again.

"I have forty thousand dollars from Mr. Kent," Beedle shouted.

Leander Lewis whirled around in his chair. Our eyes met—his narrowed and blinking rapidly, mine blazing. I could almost read the question in his mind: *How much is a British Guiana Magenta worth when there are two in the world?*

He was at a disadvantage against me, since he was buying for a client. He had to figure the client's reactions and desires. He hesitated a moment too long.

"Going, going, gone," Beedle chanted, "to Mr. Kent for forty thousand dollars."

I knew that was the second highest price ever paid for a stamp in the history of the world. Once more I walked up the aisle. With a shaking hand I wrote out a check for forty thousand dollars and handed it to Beedle. He was perspiring as if he had been in a prize fight. Reporters encircled me. They were jostling and talking at once. I held up my hand. My course was clear. My voice was steady.

"Gentlemen, I have a statement to make."

I took the stamp out of the box and held it up so that they could see and admire it.

"Gentlemen, for years there has been just one British Guiana Magenta in the world. I had it."

I took out my cigarette lighter and twirled the wheel with my thumb. As the flame shot up I thrust the British Guiana Magenta into it.

"No!" Mr. Beedle shouted. "No! No! No!"

Someone screamed. Flash bulbs went off. The British Guiana Magenta floated down to the floor, a charred ember.

"Gentlemen, there is still only one British Guiana Magenta in the world. I still have it."

Pandemonium broke loose then. The reporters sprinted out to the telephones in the foyer. Beedle was shaking all over, tears rolling down his cheeks. I felt a hand on my shoulder. It was Leander Lewis. His face was ashen.

"Mr. Kent, White's in London, in Beau Brummell's time, never saw anything like that. I'll never forget this day as long as I live."

He mopped his brow with a monogrammed handkerchief. "What is your asking price for the British Guiana Magenta?"

I knew then that I had won our long struggle. "My asking price for the only British Guiana Magenta in the world," I said, "is \$80,000."

Under his impeccable little mustache his mouth opened and closed a few times, but nothing came out of it. I supplied the words for him. "Eighty thousand dollars, Mr. Lewis; you heard me."

Again his mouth worked. Finally he groaned, "I'll take it."

As soon as the check was in my pocket and I could escape from the new assaults of the reporters and the crowd of curious onlookers, I rushed out of the auction building. As I

turned the corner to the subway station, the full significance of what had happened struck me. I jumped into a taxi and rode in privacy and comfort all the way to my apartment.

Harriet met me at the door. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes seemed to glisten with an unnatural brightness.

"Darling," I gasped, "I've just sold the British Guiana Magenta to Leander Lewis."

I took the check out of my wallet and gave it to her.

"Tom!" She stared hypnotized at the inked-in figures. "I knew that if you and Lewis bid against each other the price would be sky-high no matter who won, but I never dreamed he'd pay that much as long as he thought there were two British Guiana Magentas in the world."

"Was it in the newspapers that Lewis would be at Small's today? I must have missed it."

"I personally made certain that Lewis would be there," Harriet's lips

curved up in a dazzling and mysterious smile. "I knew that you'd figure out some way to bid on that second British Guiana Magenta. What did you try to do? Mortgage our future for the next hundred years?"

I nodded, half-ashamed.

"But I knew that if you allowed Lewis to get the stamp that would mean the price was terrific . . . terrific enough to satisfy even you."

"But he didn't get it during the auction," I protested, "he bought it from me afterwards."

I was about to give her an account of the drama that had been played out that afternoon when a puzzling thought edged into my mind. I looked down at Harriet, frowning.

"How did you know about the discovery of the second stamp?"

"Tom, darling, there is no second stamp. I sent your British Guiana Magenta to the auction."

I realized then that our only quarrel was over at last.

The Horse that Swam to Victory

■ Amid the staccato drumming of the hoofbeats, and the clucking of the drivers, the twelve trotters and sulkies pounded into the turn headed for the backstretch . . .

The experts gave Chris Spencer, the ten-year-old ex-champ, little chance to run off with the \$25,000 mile-and-a-half Gotham Trot stake race. Little chance against Yankee Hanover, winner of nineteen and beaten only once. But maybe he could do it. Just maybe. . . . I remembered how two years ago Chris had gone lame—in this very same event:

An eight-year-old at the time, he was not, as trotters go, too old. But the continual pounding from the hard-surfaced dirt-packed tracks had taken its toll on the muscles and delicate bone structure of this game bay gelding. Too bad, the wise ones said, there goes a trotter with a great heart.

Only, owner and trainer Dunbar Bostwick didn't give up. He knew all about his trotter's heart, but his legs were something else. Bostwick was familiar with water therapy and how it worked on humans. Why not horses? He had noticed that trotting horses used the same gaited motions in the water as they did in a trot on the track. This meant they used the same muscles too.

So Bostwick took his horse for a swim. That is, he put a halter on Chris and then got in a rowboat, leading his trotter into deep water where the animal's legs began pumping as though floating down the track in a graceful trot.

This first effort in the summer of 1951, was for only five minutes. Then the time was steadily increased until this Weissmuller of horsemanship was swimming an hour at a time. Pumping, always pumping his legs—but no pounding from the hard track especially designed for harness racing—Bostwick kept Chris at it all summer.

After a winter at pasture, the aqua-therapy treatments started again in June, 1952. Five days a week—fifty minutes a day. After six weeks of this grueling schedule Chris looked fit again. Then he won three races—one a two-mile race at Roosevelt Raceway. Now he was in this one at Yonkers . . .

Around the backstretch they went for the last time. The pace was being stepped up. One horse couldn't stand the speed and broke. Another broke. The rest held on gamely, ten-year-old Chris with them. They came into the stretch and then he started to roll. One, two, three lengths. Chris was pouring it on. And then a wonderful triumph as he crossed the finish line in the lead, having raced the mile-and-a-half in the record time of 3:09.

—Walter Livingston

Those are the most terrifying words in modern warfare, according to next of kin. Here's how the Army recovers its dead and missing, without a single mistake in two major wars.

By PHILIP BERNAL

MISSING IN

The Communist guerrillas spotted them from their vantage point as soon as they entered the valley. Five American soldiers, wandering unsupported over the lonely hills of South Korea, were a tempting target for Sung Yuk's forty-man band. The Commies deployed for action.

Down below, Lieutenant Osborne was worried. G2 had been certain of the coordinates. The location of the grave had been positively plotted, but Osborne and his men were at the spot and he couldn't find it. He was rechecking the coordinates when the guerrillas struck.

Corporal Lanzo saw them first. His warning shout still hung on the icy air as the Americans hit the dirt. Scrunched down behind boulders, their M1s and BARs started dropping Reds. Lieutenant Osborne worked the



ACTION

MISLEADING ACTION



EDITOR'S NOTE: Although all the incidents described in the above article are based on true occurrences, all names, places and times have been falsified or otherwise changed out of respect for the sensibilities of the next-of-kin.

team's radio frantically; air cover had to come and come soon. He estimated that the guerrillas outnumbered his team at least ten to one. Without air support it would be just a matter of time before they would be marked *Missing in Action*; Korean guerrillas seldom took prisoners.

The band of GIs trapped among the gullies and draws of the desolate South Korean backcountry were members of an Army Graves Registration Search and Recovery Team.

The mission of Graves Registration is to locate, disinter, identify and return to the United States the remains of American military personnel who die while on active duty.

FIVE minutes after the call for help was sent out, Private Withers lay in the draw with a bullet through his shoulder and the Commies were closing in. Although a half a dozen guerrillas lay sprawled in front of the Americans' position, their fellows were slowly creeping up, getting close enough for the final overwhelming rush. Lieutenant Osborne prayed silently as he sighted his carbine and squeezed off a shot.

Suddenly, the deep bellow of jet engines drowned out the rattle of small-arms fire as two UN fighters zoomed over the scene of the skirmish. The Americans ceased firing and buried their faces in the dirt; they knew what was coming.

The searing heat of the napalm bombs dropped by the planes a hundred yards to the Americans' front singed the cloth of GI uniforms and roasted ten of Sunk Yuk's guerrillas. Screaming, the Reds broke for the hills, leaving their dead behind.

While the fighters flew close cover overhead, the team scouted the area; and after a few minutes of rapid search, the grave was located. Sergeant Ahern noticed what looked like a small slide at approximately the spot indicated on the map as being the grave site. Fast work with pick and spade disinterred the remains of an unknown GI. While the skeleton was being placed into the zipper-fastened rubber effects pouch, Lieutenant Osborne checked the burial site thoroughly and collected the moldy shreds of clothing and shattered equipment found buried with the soldier.

There were no dogtags; but the clothing, the smashed carbine found interred with the remains and the bits of rusted equipment would be of value to the experts back at the Mortuary Center in Japan. Theirs was the intricate, painstaking job of identifying Lieutenant Osborne's unknown soldier, buried during the early retreat to the Pusan perimeter. The final result of their hazardous

adventure would be another name struck from the *Missing in Action* list.

The work of graves registration can be divided into three separate spheres: recovery, identification and shipment. While each of these spheres overlap, each requires trained experts; recovery teams must have knowledge of map-reading, geology and archaeology; identification experts are almost all scientists, doctors, dentists and finger-print experts; and shipment calls for transportation experience with all types of carriers.

Recovery operations are the dangerous part of graves registration work. Sometimes, as in the case of Lieutenant Osborne's team, a search can turn into a combat recovery and even in non-combat areas graves registration personnel must often risk their necks to recover the dead.

Graves registration personnel are stationed all over the world wherever there are American troops. Each officer of the service is assigned a particular sector as his complete responsibility.

When a long-vanished plane is discovered wrecked deep in a Central American jungle, the news filters down to the graves registration officer in the Caribbean Command headquarters. After the location of the wreck is verified as accurately as possible, the officer has to get to the wreck and remove the remains. How he will get there is his problem; his means of transportation may vary from the most modern of helicopters to a native dugout canoe. Sometimes the only way to the wreck will be by a week's walk through the reeking jungle. And he never knows what he'll find when he gets there.

In one case, a P-40 lay squashed down on its unexploded 500-pound bomb. It had gone out on a routine anti-submarine patrol from its Caribbean base in 1942 and never came back. A wandering native had discovered it in 1950 and the news of his find had eventually been relayed to the American military command in the Panama Canal Zone.

After a three-day trek through the jungle, the graves registration officer and his sergeant stood looking at the crumpled plane. The native had made no mention of the bomb and the Quartermaster officer was no ordnance expert.

His experience with the corrosive effect of jungle weather on metal told him that the firing mechanism of the bomb must be rusted to impotence; but, at the same time, understandable fear of setting off the charge while he was near the bomb made his hands and knees tremble.

He wondered what unkind fate had brought him to this place as he threw

away his cigarette and walked toward the plane. When he reached its side he paused and listened for the ominous ticking that would warn him the bomb was activated. The jungle sounds were all he heard.

A glance inside the cockpit showed him that the pilot's remains were there, the skeleton intact in the flying suit. It also showed that the safety belt was still strapped across the skeleton and that its buckle was rusted tight. A quick slash of the lieutenant's hunting knife severed the rotted belt; sweat poured down the officer's face as he bent over into the cockpit and gathered the remains into his arms. He heaved upward with a rapidity born of quiet desperation and an instant later he was running away from the plane with the skeleton cradled in his arms.

A SAFE distance away he and his sergeant placed the remains carefully on the ground and lay down beside them. They had a cigarette while they watched the plane for signs of explosion. The wreck remained quiet. After a few minutes, they grinned sheepishly at one another and the officer got up to strip the plane of all serial numbers and other identifying data while the sergeant carefully put the remains into a pouch. When the wreck had been stripped, the officer painted a big yellow cross on its most prominent part and the team started its journey back to civilization. As they left, the officer looked back. He could see the cross through the foliage, the mark of another successful recovery by a graves registration team.

Pulling skeletons away from unexploded bombs may not be routine work for graves registration personnel, but neither is climbing the lower ranges of the Himalayas, or tracking across the hot sands of the Arabian desert. But these things have all been done by them in the past and will be again whenever the discovery of the remains of military personnel demands it.

After World War II, squads of specially trained recovery troops ranged from Greenland to the Argentine, and from Labrador to Tibet, locating, recovering and returning to their families in the United States the remains of vanished servicemen.

But it is combat recovery that guarantees the Purple Hearts for graves registration personnel. In earlier days when fighting ceased at nightfall and combatants usually respected the amenities, combat recovery was a nasty but safe job. Burial parties sallied forth from each side at nightfall, gathered their dead and returned them to their own lines for proper burial. Search was unnecessary then, but the fluidity and increased savagery

of modern war have combined to render such humane procedure largely inoperative.

Total world-wide war, fought over all types of terrain, assures that many dead shall disappear until it is only by chance that someone stumbles upon their last remains. The bodies of aircraft personnel shot down deep behind enemy lines, for example, are always at the mercy of the foe, the geography and the elements. In Korea, graves registration personnel faced an enemy who didn't care what happened to the dead, ours as well as their own, and who killed graves registration men as quickly as they did any other UN soldier.

Combat recovery in World War II differed sharply in the European theater and the Asiatic-Pacific. The Germans and Italians respected, in most cases, our graves registration personnel (as we did theirs) and the chief hazards of combat recovery in Europe were the impersonal fire of long range artillery and the ever-present mines. Only in isolated instances did our recovery teams come under direct small-arms fire.

Soon after the Normandy landings, a small American infantry patrol was cut off and isolated from the main body. After taking severe losses, the survivors were forced to surrender. Before their dead could either be buried by their comrades or picked up by the Germans, the advance of the American main body forced both the captors and captives to evacuate the area.

That night, a squad of graves registration personnel warily entered the scene of the patrol's last stand. The area was no-man's land but apparently free from enemy activity. Suddenly, the Americans found themselves under the guns of a heavily armed Wehrmacht reconnaissance patrol. When the Germans had disarmed them and were ready to take their prisoners back for questioning, the German officer was startled to be addressed in German by one of his captives. The latter, a non-com from Wisconsin, rapidly acquainted the officer with the reason the Americans had been in no-man's land, whereupon the German not only apologized and released them, but also had his own men assist their late captives. His gallantry, however, had its limits; he kept their weapons and rations when he sent the Americans back to their own lines.

Many times during the Second World War, American graves registration personnel and their German and Italian counterparts actually exchanged messages of information and identification soon after the actual fighting ceased in their particular sector. Hence, the whole European recovery and identification problem,

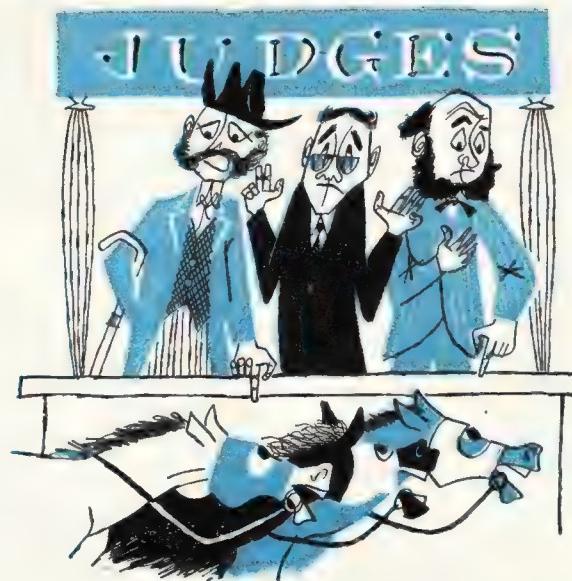


PHOTO FINISH

■ Photogenic horses are worth their weight in uranium. A finely-chiseled equine profile, silhouetted on a frame of celluloid against a finish line, has padded the bank account of uncounted racing fans. Dollars have changed hands like poker chips on the margin of a hair's-breadth photo finish.

When horses step past the payoff station at the rate of 45 feet per second, it takes a high-speed camera to stop them in stride. Today's cameras do just that, recording 360 separate pictures per second, permitting the horse to travel only one-fourth of an inch between negatives. Developed in a darkroom atop the grandstand, the film is projected on a screen for the scrutiny of the judges—all within 22 seconds after a race has been run. It is difficult to make a wrong call today, but it was not always so.

Less than twenty years ago, three men, squinting across an imaginary line, were sole arbiters of each finish. These three men could overrule a grandstand. Then someone brought up the problem of the "deceptive angle"—that only those squarely on the finish line were able to call the winner, whereas those below the wire invariably gave the inside horse the call, and those above the finish scrapped just as stoutly for the outside horse.

Finally, at one eastern race track some seasons back, three saw-horses were ranged across the running strip, and observers were placed above and below the judges' stand. One picked the inside "horse," the other took the one outside. When they stepped into the pagoda they found the sawhorse in the middle in front of both other "horses," by many inches. That "deceptive angle" problem was solved, strangely enough, not by a racing expert but by a United States senator—the late Senator Leland Stanford of California, for whom Stanford University is named.

Senator Stanford loved horses, but he loved a racing argument even more. One day, in discussing the stride of a thoroughbred, he stated that there were occasions when all four feet were off the ground. His friends angrily debated it.

"Very well, I will prove it," Senator Stanford said. He engaged a professional photographer named Muybridge who rigged up 24 cameras at Palo Alto so that when an animal passed before the lenses, strings attached to the shutters were struck and released. This gave a sequence of pictures of a horse in motion.

The pictures not only proved Stanford's point but had two other effects. They led to the end of the vote-of-the-judges system of calling races, and they were one forerunner of today's motion pictures.

As the photo-finish camera shows, there is more to horse racing than meets the eye.

—Walter Livingston

both during and after hostilities, was much smaller than that encountered in the Asiatic-Pacific theater.

In the Far East, the combat recovery picture was entirely different. The Japanese, although extremely reverent of their own dead, did not care much what happened to ours. They would bury or cremate our dead when they had to; but (except for the instances of airmen shot down over the Japanese home islands) they generally kept no records, either of the identities of the dead or of the places of burial.

In addition, the nature of the terrain itself added incalculable difficulties to the recovery and identification of our dead. Bodies deteriorated rapidly in the hot, moist tropics; cloth rotted away in days and most metals corroded almost to nothing in weeks. Further, there was not the slightest chivalric attitude on the part of the Japanese toward our graves registration personnel. Like the Koreans, they felt that any and all American soldiers were a worthwhile target.

In a theater of operations, Quartermaster Graves Registration companies are usually assigned in the ratio of one per each Army Corps. They set up operations directly behind the combat elements and receive the Corps' dead at the collecting point. Whenever possible, identification is made there by officers of the unit having the casualties. Then the administrative work is begun and the remains are transported to a military cemetery in the rear for temporary interment. When the remains cannot,

for any of many reasons, be identified at the collecting point, they are sent to strategically located mortuary centers where identification experts take over.

Everything hinges on positive identification. A wrong identification is infinitely worse than none at all.

There has not been a single verified case of mis-identification by graves registration in all the hundreds of thousands of cases handled in World War II and Korea. The identification experts of the graves registration service have no official motto, but if they had, it could well be: "Be absolutely certain—or not at all." There is no "maybe" in their dictionary.

All remains that are not positively identified in Korea are sent to the mortuary center at Camp Kokura, near Kure, Japan. There are gathered the service's staff of identification experts; there they have their laboratories and records to help them to identify unknown soldiers. It was to Kokura that Lieutenant Osborne's "Unknown" was sent.

The identification of this particular Unknown began as soon as his remains had arrived at the mortuary center. The first step in the process was the scientific re-assembly of the skeleton. A chart was made up which showed the missing bones and the condition of the recovered ones. The skeleton was then carefully examined, especially for signs of diseased bones and old fractures.

Dental technicians inspected the teeth and jaws and made up another chart; this one indicating clearly the

remain's oral characteristics. Both charts were filed away to await compilation of the other clues that industrial technicians in nearby laboratories were garnering from the shreds of cloth and the pieces of equipment so carefully collected by Lieutenant Osborne.

The textile experts established that the rotted bits of cloth were originally part of a cotton khaki uniform, weight #9, a type worn in action by the first troops rushed to Korea in June of 1950. Like the cloth, every bit of Unknown's equipment was gone over with scientific exactness. When all the experts were through and their findings collated, the results were bound into a jacket, given a serial number and forwarded to the correlators, who studied all the data and compared its clues with the extensive material on missing personnel in their files. Their first point of departure in their search for Unknown's true identity stemmed from the reconstruction of the skeleton.

The anthropologist who had done the reconstruction established that Unknown must have been between five feet ten inches and six feet tall. Therefore the correlators were able to discard for purposes of this identity search all data relating to unknowns either shorter than five ten or taller than six feet. This single fact cut the number of "possibles" from more than eight thousand to less than three thousand.

Next, the correlators turned to the dental report. The dentists had established that all of Unknown's wisdom teeth had been extracted quite some time prior to death. With this clue, all possibles of the same height as Unknown, but whose Army medical records indicated that their mouths had contained at least one wisdom tooth at the time of their disappearance, were eliminated.

Then the correlators moved on to the textiles and equipment. These held vital clues to identification. How many of the remaining possibles could have been wearing cotton khaki at the time they were reported missing in action? Elimination, through Army administrative records showing the time of the year of the disappearance of the possibles still under consideration, brought the number of these down to twenty-three.

Now the trail was getting hotter. One of the remaining twenty-three was almost surely Unknown, but more facts would have to be studied, more detective work done, before the experts could be sure.

The chemists had a few clumps of hair under analysis. Their research revealed that Unknown's hair had been either blond or reddish. The result of that search was to cut the



"Look at the drumsticks on that chick."

figure of possibles down to seven.

The correlators then turned to the historians. They handed the latter the unit records of each of the seven possibles, and the historians traced the locations of each of the units from the time they went into action until the date of the disappearances of each of the possibles.

THE units of five of the possibles had never been near the area where Unknown was recovered. (Unknown's smashed carbine had been found buried with him; therefore he probably had not been captured elsewhere and then transported to the spot where he had been found.) Thus, the possibles had dwindled down to two.

The correlators checked the serial number of the carbine against issue records, but without result. They did the same for the other pieces of equipment, but again the result was negative.

Another check of the data brought to light one clue upon which final positive identification could hinge. Unknown's skeleton had not shown any old fractures or deformities, but the medical records of one of the two remaining possibles indicated a history of a slight curvature of the spine due to a slipped disc. The doctors and anthropologists re-examined Unknown's reconstructed skeleton. Luckily, the vertebrae concerned were present and the consensus of opinion among the scientists was that Unknown had never suffered from a slipped disc or a spinal curvature.

With this elimination of one of the two possibles left under consideration, Unknown was assigned a tentative name, rank and serial number; and the whole mass of data, together with the substantiating certificates of all the experts involved, was turned over to a board of officers.

The duty of the board was to re-examine thoroughly all the evidence to determine if the tentative identity assigned to Unknown was positively his and his alone. If the board had the *slightest* doubt, the whole process would have to start over again from the very beginning.

The findings of the board agreed with the conclusions reached by the experts. After required administrative work, Unknown was given his identification, his name was taken off the *Missing in Action* list and his kin were notified. Then he was prepared for shipment and sent home on the earliest available transport.

The case described above shows typical methods used to establish identity. But each case will vary both in system used and in ease of procedure. Unknown's identity in the example was neither too easy to establish nor too hard. The experts

were seriously handicapped, however, because they did not have available one of the very best sources for establishing positive identification, namely: fingerprints.

When it is possible to obtain fingerprints from remains, they are invaluable because they transform a tedious, painstaking job into a relatively mechanical, but foolproof operation.

The fingerprints of all servicemen and women are kept on file in Washington. Whenever a "clean" set of prints is taken from remains, they are immediately flown there and identity is soon established. The experts can identify if the print of only one finger is sent, although in that case the procedure takes much longer.

The unfortunate failing of fingerprints is obvious; they depend upon a relatively fragile and easily decomposed part of the human body. When remains are even only partially deteriorated it is extremely difficult to get prints directly from the fingers. At such times, the experts slice the skin off the tips of the remain's fingers and put the skin over their own (fingers) like little gloves so that they can get a clean impression.

Once identification has been clearly established, the last sphere of graves registration activity comes into play: shipment. There is little danger and adventure in this phase; generally it is just hard, exacting work.

The graves registration service works in close cooperation with the Transportation Corps and the Navy and Air Force during the shipment phase of its activities. But its responsibility for the remains does not pass to its sister services. Until the remains are finally interred, all the burden is carried by the service; the responsibility is never shared.

The escorts of the remains (and all remains are escorted by a fellow serviceman of the same or higher rank) are instructed in their duties by graves registration personnel. Finally, after the remains have been interred, the last official act by a representative of the United States Army at the grave is performed by a member of the graves registration service—he gives the flag that covered the casket to the closest female next-of kin present (unless a widower father specifically requests it).

No aspect of graves registration work is particularly pleasant, but the personnel assigned to it are aware of the importance of their work. And sometimes this importance is brought to their attention in a way that they can never forget.

Master Sergeant Gomez had enlisted in the United States Army many years before he was mortally wounded on the Inchon road. Although the Sergeant had been an American citizen for many years, his next of kin were

Panamanians and they requested that the remains be sent to Panama to lie in the family plot.

To show the Sergeant his deserved honors, the graves registration officer in the Canal Zone was detailed by his headquarters to arrange, in cooperation with Panamanian authorities, a full military funeral. Each step of the touching series of ceremonies—the Honor Guard stationed at the pier to escort the casket as it came off the ship; the lying-in-state at the church; the final parade of American troops and Panamanian police—each aspect of the honors accorded the Sergeant were taken care of by the graves registration officer.

But the hardworking officer received a sweet reward. After the services at the graveside, he approached the mother of the hero in order to give her the American and Panamanian flags that had covered her son's casket on its last journey. The little, shriveled woman's hands clasped his as she said the words that were never to be forgotten by the officer:

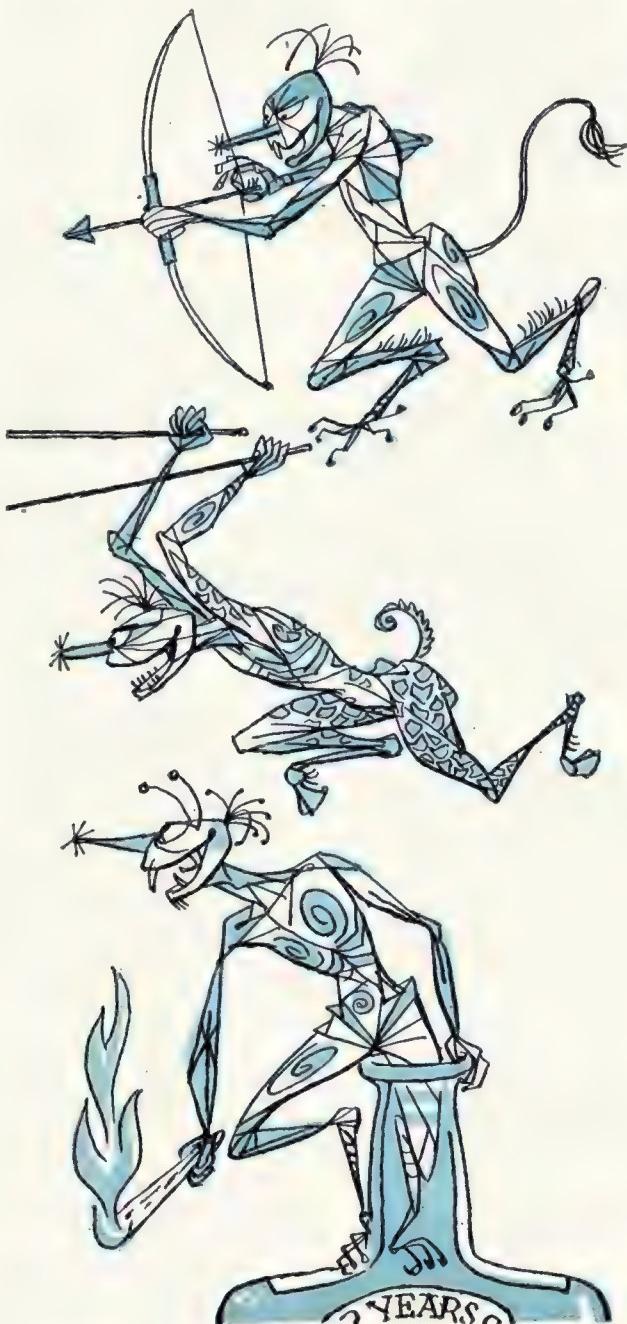
"Señor, today you and your Army have done more to win the love and gratitude of my people than anything you have ever done before."





Illustrated by HANK BERGER

the Man who could cure HANGOVERS



He could, too.

*And, if it hadn't been for
the "side reactions,"
the formula could have made him
rich and famous.*

By MARTIN KANE

■ The wedding reception was held at the home of the bride—a place of broad lawns, cool patios and plenty of gin, whisky and champagne.

Ben Snow tried them all. He toasted the happy couple in champagne, and many who watched him from the corners of their eyes thought it was a sporting thing for him to do. It was well known that Ann Leatherbee, the bride, had ditched him, with the cool sweetness of your true lady opportunist, in order to marry Graves Bassett. Bassett had wavy yellow hair and green money. And he was, furthermore, Ben's boss.

After the toast, Ben shifted from champagne to martinis, and found them good. He had reached a point where he was investigating the potential of the martini-with-scotch-chaser, when a presence near him said:

"I think it's unfair."

Somehow she had slipped quietly into the lawn chair beside him, or else she had been there unnoticed when he lowered away into his own chair, balancing a brimming glass in either hand. He wasn't sure. He looked at her, affecting benign puzzlement.

"But everything's unfair," he said. "No justice. So no point making comments about it. Unfair to make comments about injustice. Grin and bear it."

He grinned at her.

"Sometimes something can be done about it," she said. "It's unfair for you to have two drinks while I have none. You could pass me that highball."

"Delighted. Share injustice with each other. Spread injustice thin enough and it won't be noticed. Could I offer you a drink?"

He handed her the scotch highball.

"Do justice to that," he said. "And what's your name?"

"Nina Thorne. You're Ben Snow, aren't you?"

"Beyond question."

"I've heard considerable about you. You're supposed to be eating your heart out, because Ann married Graves Bassett."

"Impossible. I'm a scientist. Research man. Interested only in cold, scientific, provable fact. No heart. Heartless. Can't eat what you don't have. Right?"

"I suppose."

"Ann did the cold, scientific, provable thing. Picked the test tube with the successful reaction. Only thing to do. As a scientist I bow to her. I drink to her."

He drank to her some more after that, and presently he awoke to find himself in a swiftly-moving convertible, the top down, a night breeze blowing through his hair and pulling the chill perspiration away from his forehead. He felt incredibly bad. The car moved along silently. When he stole a look at the driver, it developed that the driver was a remarkably pretty girl, hatless, her short, dark hair tousled by the wind. Beneath a white wrap she wore a sapphire gown. Blue eyes, probably, he thought, and very likely the girl who sat beside him on the lawn. Name of Nina Something.

"Did I do anything—anything disgraceful?" he asked after a while.

She turned and smiled at him, then her eyes went back to the road.

"You were all right," she said. "You bowed from the hips until you passed out. A perfect gentleman."

"Where did I pass out?"

"Here in the car. Fell asleep, perhaps I should say."

"Thanks. Where are you taking me?"

"Home, if you'll tell me where it is."

He told her. She swung the car about, expertly, and headed back toward town.

"Feeling better?" she asked after they had covered a few miles.

"No. I feel worse. Worse than I've ever felt in my life."

"It's natural. You'll have a dreadful hangover in the morning."

"They're inevitable, aren't they?"

"So my father used to say. I wouldn't know."

"Don't drink!"

"I take one or two during an evening."

"Usually my limit, too."

She laughed. "It's excusable—this once. You were feeling badly-used."

"I think I'm over that."

She left him in front of his apartment house, but not before he had obtained her telephone number on the ground that he was in her debt and must repay her sometime. He also learned that she ran a small model agency and had known Ann Leatherbee, now Bassett, when she was in college. . . .

Next morning he awoke under the impression that he had fallen asleep inside a bell tower. The largest clapper of them all was banging against his temple. He shut off the alarm clock, which ended the clangor but not the pain. Lifting his head from the pillow was torture. His mouth was dry, his tongue swollen. When he opened his eyes they throbbed.

"Aspirin," he thought. "Only thing that can save me."

He groped his way to the bathroom and, supporting himself with one hand on the washbowl, opened the medicine chest. From among its contents his groping, quivering fingers chose a small bottle containing several white tablets.

"Thought there were more," he said. "I'll have to ration them. Two now. Two before I have to bend over to put on my socks."

He gulped the pills down and followed them with a glass of water. It tasted foul. Then he managed to take a quick shower, thinking as he did so that here was a man of heroic substance.

"Principled and sanitary, anyway. A hero probably would sing."

It was while he was shaving that he noticed his hand had steadied, that he could hold his head up without really trying, and that all the pain had vanished. His eyes, peering through the lather, no longer resembled those of a long-dead haddock. They were clear and bright, and something of his old intelligence was shining through. When he finished shaving and came out of the bathroom, he noticed that he moved with the coordination of one who spends most of his evenings in a gym.

"It's a miracle," he thought. "At some time in my life I must have helped an old lady across the street. This is my reward."

And it was not until he had fin-

ished dressing and was checking the geometry of his bow tie in the mirror, noting how roseately healthy and eager his features reflected back at him, that he thought of the little bottle of tablets. His mind, clear and incisive now, knew they were not aspirin tablets at all.

They were, instead, tablets of his own making in the research laboratories of Kirkland, Skinner & Dean, renowned makers of the world's finest pharmaceuticals, who would dump all their aspirin and milk of magnesia, all their proprietary pills and potions down a drain, if only one of their expensive research men would come up with a good hangover cure.

And he, Ben Snow, the youngest and least-honored of all that crew of smocked and spectacled scientists, had done that very thing. An accident, to be sure, but so was the discovery of penicillin.

ALL he had been looking for, really, was an improved antihistamin—one which would cover all the allergies from strawberry rash to poison ivy, a pill to permit allergy victims to eat onion soup, sniff ragweed and sleep without fear on feather pillows.

He leaped across the bedroom and into the bath. Minutes earlier, if it had been possible for him at all, the movement would have cost excruciating pain. But now it was effortless. There was the bottle, three pills left in it. It was an aspirin bottle—but one which never had contained aspirin. A few days before he had dropped his first new pills into it at the lab, intending to use them for tentative tests on a friend who sneezed whenever he passed a pet shop because he was allergic to parakeets. If they had worked on the friend, he would have filed a report recommending really extensive tests. Otherwise he would have forgotten it, because twice previously he had filed premature enthusiastic reports, and Graves Bassett, recently appointed his superior, was waiting for another to make an issue of it.

But now he had something which That Dirty Bassett, as Graves was popularly known, would have to acknowledge as the greatest contribution to the drug industry since the discovery of the ice cream soda.

Tucking the precious bottle in his pocket, Ben paused only for a cup of coffee on his way to the Kirkland, Skinner & Dean laboratories. He lunched before his return, chewing impatiently on a ham sandwich, and by early evening had pressed out five hundred perfect pills. By that time he was hungry and remembered his debt to Nina.

He reached her at the model agency. With only the barest hesitation at the

word "cocktails," she agreed to have dinner with him.

On the second martini, he broached a little of what he had in mind.

"Can you trust me implicitly?" he asked.

"Either way," she said. "Plicitly or implicitly. You look like a bomb about to go off. What's bothering you?"

"I believe I've made a discovery. It's—well, epoch-making. But it must be tested. And testing means that I have to get drunk, very, very drunk."

Her eyes were less warm than they had been a moment before. Their color shifted perceptibly from the blue of a gas flame to that of a lump of ice.

"You seem able to do that without help," she observed.

"But I do need help. This discovery is so extraordinary, such a boon to man that, if anything were to happen to me as a result of my testing, everything would be lost. You took such good care of me last night—could you do it again?"

"I could but I don't seem to have much enthusiasm for the idea."

"I'll make it up to you, Nina. With emeralds, rubies and mink—provided, that is, it works out as I believe it will."

"Couldn't you test this whatever-it-is on hamsters or something?"

"Too cruel. Only humans deserve this."

"I'm a game little girl, Ben, and there's something about the way your ears wiggle when you talk. So all right."

He had two more martinis, therefore, while she toyed with her first and then they had dinner. He ate lightly, drank heavily of Burgundy, and passed up coffee in favor of a double brandy. Later, at a night club, he discovered that he could dance divinely on straight bourbon, that it was possible to rhumba in waltz time and that a small, crowded dance floor can be cleared rapidly if one of the dancers pretends it's a hockey rink, using an ice cube for a puck and a saxophone for a hockey stick. They left directly after the game, which was called on account of three husky waiters and an embittered saxophone player.

NINA took him home then. She propped him up in the self-service elevator, pushed the button for his floor and, unaccountably, departed without kissing him good night.

Weeping over this neglect, he poured himself a generous nightcap and did not exactly go to bed. It seemed to come to him.

Next morning, Ben felt even worse than he had the day before, but two of his magic pills set the world right again. He had the wit to clock the

reaction with a stopwatch and carefully noted that, even without benefit of a cold shower, all traces of headache vanished in two minutes, three and 2/5 seconds, hand tremor in 2:15:4, and eye blear in three minutes flat. Beyond that, he observed, a look of gentle asceticism was discernible in his expression, but he could scarcely credit that and refused to put it in his notes.

He spent the morning pressing out more pills against the day when he would reveal his discovery to Wesley A. P. Dean, president of Kirkland, Skinner & Dean, who had once thought Ben Snow was the brightest hope in pharmaceutical research but now passed him in the corridors without seeming to see him. By some subtle alchemy, certainly not by honest chemistry, Graves Bassett had replaced Ben in the old man's regard.

Once during the morning he noted that Graves was standing nearby, watching him curiously, but Ben was too preoccupied to think much of it. He had luncheon with Nina and persuaded her to try again that evening.

"It's a strain on a girl," she said, "but I'll do it just because you say it's for science and your eyebrows have little curls in them."

That night was like the two previous evenings except that they scored two enforced departures from night clubs and Nina didn't bother to prop him up in the elevator. She let him slump. And next morning the pills worked as well as ever.

Still damp from the shower, he telephoned Nina for a luncheon date and was turned down.

"I don't know what you're trying to do," she said, "but I've lost interest in science. Have you seen the morning papers?"

"Not yet. Haven't even had breakfast. My first thought was of you then food."

"Read Winchell. Your next thought will be to leave town."

And she hung up.

He read Winchell at breakfast in the corner restaurant . . .

"Scandal brewing for rising young research scientist of Kirkland, Skinner & Dean, who's been making like a pill in the swank spots and getting thrown out like yesterday's garbage . . . What that beautiful model agency head sees in him is beyond Broadway . . ."

He tried to get Nina back to apologize and to explain the high purpose behind his actions, but she was either out or not answering the telephone. He was thankful, at least, that Winchell had not identified him by name.

He was thankful until he got to the office, where he found on his desk a note from Mr. Dean's secretary. It was phrased in the peremptory tone

she used when she knew you were in disfavor.

"Mr. Dean wants to see you," the note said. "Immediately."

Mr. Dean was waiting for him, his nostrils twitching as if about to breathe forth flame, and waiting with him was Graves Bassett, whose golden hair seemed at this moment to have been derived from a diet of canary. Graves managed to look sternly displeased and quite happy at the same time.

"All right, Ben," said Mr. Dean, who was noted for his fairness, "sit down and tell us all about it before I fire you."

"That Winchell thing?" Ben asked.

"That's the one. Do you deny it?"

"No, sir, I don't. But after all it doesn't name me. So how could you have known?"

"Tell him, Bassett."

GRaves Bassett passed a hand through his hair, intensifying the wave and at the same time conveying the thought that this was a most distressing moment for him.

"As you know, Ben," he said, "Ann and I postponed our honeymoon so that I could oversee the final stages of the Binger study on alkaloids. It's going rather well, incidentally, but that's neither here nor there. The point is that I've been trying to entertain Ann evenings so that she wouldn't be too disappointed about our disrupted wedding trip. Well, the night before last, we were passing the Club Empire in a taxi, when a drunk who looked very much like you was being forcibly ejected. Ann was sure it was you, but to me it seemed impossible that an employee of KS&D would be in such a condition. I was sure there must have been a mistake next morning when I passed your lab table. You appeared none the worse for wear, I must say."

"However, last night Ann and I stopped in at the Eden—for some after-theater supper, Mr. Dean—and you were there in a dreadful state. You were dropping cold table knives down the backs of ladies in evening dress. And it was undeniably you. Furthermore, you were forcibly ejected again."

"How do I look now?" Ben asked.

"I'm very much surprised at how well you look but the point is that you were very, very drunk last night and endangering the reputation of KS&D."

"Which, as you know, is priceless," Mr. Dean interjected. "On the other hand, Ben, it's hard to believe you've been on a two-day bender. Aside from your previous reputation for sobriety you look in the pink of condition. Still, the resiliency of youth, perhaps—"

"It's nothing of the sort, Mr. Dean," Ben interrupted. "It's pills."

"Pills?"

"I've discovered a hangover cure."

Mr. Dean looked at him hard, then got up and went to the door.

"Don't let anyone within fifty feet of this office," he commanded his secretary. "No one must overhear what is said in here."

Then he closed the door and turned to Ben.

"All right, Ben," he said. "Tell us about it. Try to keep your voice down. Naturally, we're all pledged to secrecy. Agreed, Graves?"

"Agreed, Mr. Dean," Graves said, choking a little. This time when he passed his hands through his hair he didn't bother about the golden wave. He just rumped it.

So Ben told them, and as he talked he saw their minds clicking away like adding machines, computing the effect on the drug market, subtracting competitors and adding millions of dollars. Mr. Dean interrupted once to telephone his broker.

"Buy me all the distillery stocks you can lay your hands on," he said. "Any company that makes whisky or gin I want to own a piece of. If I own anything in companies that make

tomato juice and Worcestershire sauce sell them short."

He turned to Ben.

"Go ahead, son," he said sweetly.

"Well, that's about all, Mr. Dean. From its effects on me I know it isn't just a palliative. It appears to be a true antidote."

"Any bad side effects?" Graves inquired.

"It's too early to say, of course, but I haven't detected any. Just a feeling of general well-being. We'll have to test extensively."

Mr. Dean nodded.

"Naturally," he said. "KS&D can't afford a public fiasco in anything so important. But the tests must be conducted in utter secrecy. No more night club drinking. Later, when we're a little more certain of our ground we will broaden the number of subjects, set up controls and so on. Finally, we'll call in the medical staff and have them repeat the tests, looking for side reactions. It wouldn't do to put something on the market which cures hangovers and destroys kidneys at the same time. Not at all. Graves, you're it."

Graves looked at him.

"I, sir? How do you mean, Mr. Dean?"

"Guinea Pig No. 2. Ben sacrificed himself for science. Now it's your turn. It worked on him. Will it work on you? That's the question. It may be that idiosyncracy is important. The pills may work on some persons and not on others. We have to find out."

"Yes, sir. I'll do it, Mr. Dean."

"You bet you will. Ben, you'd better stay with him. Confin him to his apartment for the duration of the tests. Measure the alcoholic content of what he consumes, give him a blood test when he's really sozzled, after he passes out see that he gets eight hours sleep. When he wakes up don't give him a pill until he's made a full report on how badly he feels. Then let him have two pills, same dosage as yourself. Better give him a blood pressure test before and after he takes the pills. That might look well in a report. Anything else you can think of, just go ahead. I have full confidence in you, Ben."

Ben and Graves left together, picked up a sphygmomanometer and other apparatus at the laboratory, then repaired to Bassett's honeymoon apartment. It took quite some explaining and persuading before Ann Bassett would consent to having her new spouse undergo the test, but Ben talked earnestly about the dedicated soul of the scientific man, and Graves mentioned the fact that Mr. Dean would fire him if he didn't go through with it . . .

It was decided that the drinking would begin at four o'clock, allowing time for a sufficiency of cocktails before dinner, and would continue thereafter until it was obvious that Graves needed no further preparation.

Ben went back to the laboratory and brought his notes up to date, then called Nina and discovered that she, too, was terribly busy. Couldn't possibly have lunch with him, or dinner. Not tonight, or Friday or next week.

He went glumly to the Bassett's apartment in time to measure out Graves' first potion, a scientific 7 to 1 martini, but without olive or lemon because it was decided that the cubic volume of these added ingredients would be too difficult to estimate. Furthermore, Ben ruled, with some satisfaction at Graves' protests, the martinis would be mixed without ice, since dilution would throw off his calculations.

Ordinarily abstemious, even at conventions, Graves needed urging at first to maintain an adequate schedule, but after the fourth warm martini he declared that Ben was taking science too seriously.

"Have a drink, Snowy ol' boy," he urged. "Lesh live it up."

But Ben declined and they went in to dinner—champagne for Graves with



"Maybe you'd be interested in something like this?"

every course—and afterward Ben put him on a diet of bourbon and water. At this point Mr. Dean dropped in to see how things were going.

"You're not overdoing it, Ben?" he asked after a look at Graves, who was trying to balance an umbrella on his chin.

"He doesn't seem to mind," Ben replied.

Mr. Dean agreed, but he seemed unhappy.

"Been getting some bad reactions about that Winchell item," he explained. "Some of our best customers have called up."

"If the tests are successful, Mr. Dean, it won't be so bad."

"That'll take months, Ben. In the meantime, the Public Relations Department points out that our Research Division is the one on which we base our reputation. Precise quality control should not be in the hands of drunks. I telephoned Mr. Winchell myself. He wouldn't reveal his source, naturally, but I gathered the tip came from someone who knows you intimately.

"I was wondering, Ben. That young woman, the model agency head—sometimes such people think notoriety is good publicity."

"This one wouldn't, Mr. Dean. She isn't speaking to me."

"That's that, then."

He went out looking grim. Graves hadn't even noticed him. Shortly before midnight, Graves was ready for bed.

Ben returned to the apartment next morning in time to awaken him and give him his pills. The change was as marvelous as that which Ben had experienced, and even Ann's dubious view of the proceedings vanished as she watched her husband emerge from his hangover like a sprinter hitting the 100-yard tape. While Ben, observing that Mrs. Bassett was by no means a sleek, glamorous creature by dawn's early light, felt doubly lucky.

Encouraged by his speedy recovery, Graves agreed to go through the same procedure for as many nights as Mr. Dean thought necessary.

THE tests went on for a week, with Mr. Dean beaming more broadly every day, but Ben was torn between satisfaction and gloom. He had been unable to get anywhere with Nina.

But his days were busy with reports and supervision of medical examinations, to determine whether the pills were causing any side effects which might invalidate them as a hangover cure. The KS&D doctor could find nothing wrong with Bassett—physically, that is—but he warned that there was always the possibility that unpleasant reactions might be delayed for weeks or months.

On the seventh morning, Graves emerged from the bathroom screaming as if in pain. It was several minutes before Ben and Ann could soothe him into coherence.

"My hair!" he whimpered at last. "It's coming out in handfuls!"

It was, too. His comb looked as if it had been used for stripping a blond cocker, and there was a bald spot on the crown of his head about the size of a silver dollar.

FORTY-FIVE minutes later there was a meeting in the office of Mr. Dean. Ben was nursing a sore area on his head, where Ann Bassett had pummelled him with her husband's hairbrush, and Graves was tremulously fingering his thinning hair—still coming out though in less volume than when he first discovered it.

"If you will get your hands down, gentlemen," Mr. Dean said, "I'll hear your report."

He looked glum. Ben had given him a sketchy version by telephone.

"The side reaction," Graves said bitterly. "This is it."

He inclined his head so that Mr. Dean could see the bald area.

"It cures hangovers," he snarled, "but it makes men bald. So much for this brilliant young scientist."

"Anything to say, Ben?" Mr. Dean asked, sighing heavily. "Anything at all?"

"I'm sure it's something to do with hormones," Ben replied. "The relationship between adrenal malfunctioning and alcoholism is considered by some medical research men to have been established quite thoroughly. The pills probably stepped up the hormone output by stimulating the adrenals. Baldness is a male characteristic and so, with more male hormones pouring into his bloodstream, Graves has begun to lose his hair."

"Well," said Mr. Dean, "we'll have to drop the whole thing, of course. Definitely non-marketable. I wouldn't even think of putting it out restricted for sale to men who are already bald. Might fall into the wrong hands. As for men with hair, well, they'd rather have hair and hangovers than no hangovers and no hair. Right, Bassett?"

"Right, Mr. Dean," said Graves and moaned a little. He looked up startled when Mr. Dean continued:

"I think you are properly punished, Bassett, for tipping Winchell about Ben's night club escapades. I won't fire you—but I'll give you every opportunity to resign. And don't bother to deny it. When you were drunk last night you tried to call Winchell to tell him something incoherent about inhuman experimentation going on at KS&D. Worse than vivisection, you said. The trouble was that

you were so intoxicated you dialed my home instead of Winchell's office—and you talked to me instead of Winchell."

Graves Bassett stood up and walked out.

"I resign," he said at the door, "but I'm going to sue for the loss of my hair."

"You won't sue," Mr. Dean replied. "When you joined the Research Division you signed a release absolving the company of any responsibility for what might happen to you as a result of experimental work."

Graves slammed the door.

"Well," Ben said, getting up, "I'm inclined to think I had better resign, too. Even though I still think something might be done with those pills."

"You do?"

"Just possibly. Of course, men don't like to lose hair but women do—excess hair, of course. Maybe with a little rejiggering of the formula I could come up with something that would be a cosmetic boon to women."

"It's ridiculous, of course," Mr. Dean said thoughtfully, "but you are exactly the kind of idiot who might turn the trick. Persistent idiot, I mean, of course. I'll tell you what. You take over Bassett's section and work on this crazy idea. After all, I am reminded frequently in our quarterly financial statements that 99 percent of the research done by companies like ours yields no profitable result."

JUST before lunch Ben completed the final report on his hangover cure for the company records. Then he put a hat gingerly on his still tender head and took a taxi to Nina's model agency. In the ante-room, several beautiful young girls were waiting for assignments but he paid them no heed as he strode past them and through a door marked "Miss Thorne."

"Drunk again?" she asked. "Or do you always barge into offices like this?"

"I've just been told that I'm a persistent idiot. And I think I'm entitled to make you an explanation."

"All right. Persist. Make one."

He told her then about the hangover cure and what happened to Graves Bassett's hair. She was still giggling over this as they were finishing lunch in a restaurant around the corner.

"Research men can't afford to be impulsive," he said, "but, you know, you have a very lovely snicker. Think you could marry a man who has sacrificed himself on the altar of Bacchus for science?"

She said she would think about it for five minutes and then say "Yes."

"Because," she explained, "a girl shouldn't be impulsive, either."

The waiter decided they didn't need dessert. •

*Very few people
know how they'd really
act in an emergency,
whether they'd be
heroes or cowards.
The record shows that,
if you ever are
face to face with danger . . .*

You're Braver Than You Think



Opportunities requiring bravery occur far more frequently than you think, such as at this scene of smouldering wreckage of a chemical plant which exploded. As has happened almost countless times in the past, volunteers rose to the occasion.

■ **By LESTER DAVID**



When Bob Ballentine was driving past Six Mile Creek near Cayce, S.C., one mid-August day he never dreamed that before five minutes elapsed he would perform an almost incredible series of heroic feats.

This is how it happened:

From the corner of his eye as he was passing the creek, Bob spotted the wheels of an automobile barely protruding above the water. They were still spinning slowly. Fresh skid marks were etched into the highway and the bushes on the creek bank were crushed flat.

Bob saw instantly that a car had just careened off the road and now lay submerged, upside down, on the creek bed.

Ballentine jammed on his brakes and bolted from the car. He ran 60 feet to a culvert above the creek and plunged in without stopping to remove his clothes. He took a long breath and ducked under.

On the oozy, murky bottom, he groped for one of the car doors, found it and tugged. Jammed by a



wall of water, it wouldn't yield. He braced himself, compressed his lips and exerted all his strength. He felt the blood pounding in his temples, and slowly the door opened. . . .

A thick screen of mud and slime made it impossible to see what was inside the car. Ballantine reached in an arm and his hand touched a form. He gripped a sleeve, yanked the figure clear and brought it to the surface. It was a young man who, on the verge of collapse, managed to gasp out that he had not been alone in the car. His entire family—mother, father, and two sisters—were still trapped inside. Miraculously, they had been able to breathe because of the air caught within the body when the car overturned and sank. But now, with the door open, water had rushed in. There wasn't much time.

So, weak and nauseous from submersion, Bob Ballantine slid from the bank and plunged once again into the creek.

Wading through the slime, he reached the car, filled his lungs and ducked under. He got his hands on two more figures, the mother and one sister, and inched them out. Battling faintness, he cradled one under each arm and dragged them to safety.

Two more lives to go.

Now Bob Ballantine rose to his feet, gulping great breaths into his air-starved lungs. It would be easy to fling himself on the tall grass and rest. So easy.

But there were two lives more. He waded again into the creek. This time he pulled out the father.

Blind with fatigue, his entire body protesting against the punishment, Bob Ballantine hit the water for the last time and in a half minute came to the surface with the limp form of the second sister. All of the other members of the family were weak and sick from their ordeal, but they were alive. This girl, however, was unconscious and there was one more heroic act to be done.

Bob did it, despite his numbness, his bone-weariness, the overwhelming desire to throw himself prone on the creek bank and just sleep. He kneeled and gave the girl artificial respiration, kept it up until her eyes flickered open and her low moans told him that she, too, would live.

And then, at last, Bob Ballantine rested.

Who was this hero who saved the entire Stotler family from certain death in South Carolina not long ago? A lifeguard, a policeman, a fireman, an adventurer whom you would expect to perform feats of heroism?

Guess again.

Robert W. Ballantine, 31 years old, was a school teacher who had never

done anything heroic in his life, never had expected to and never dreamed he had the guts! . . .

And yet, amazing as it sounds, Ballantine's case is actually only one of thousands. Dig through newspaper files, as I did, in the little and big towns, and you will be staggered by the sheer volume of stories of acts of rare bravery performed by average people. Skip the rescues by uniformed guardians of the peace, Red Cross disaster workers, the professionals who are in the business of saving lives. Read, instead, about the haberdashery clerks, accountants, lawyers, mechanics, salesmen, farmers, even schoolboys and housewives, who have exhibited courage in the face of danger, courage they never thought they possessed.

Jump around the country for a few dramatic instances:

In Los Angeles, Cal., an elevator operator battles two criminals who make a break for freedom, is severely wounded by gunfire but retains his grip on the two until help comes. In Temple, Texas, a salesman climbs through a window and walks through searing flame to carry a sick woman from her bed. In Enid, Okla., an accountant throws himself in front of a toppling wall to prevent a child from being crushed and holds the incredible weight on his shoulders while the child lies safely under him as he crouches. In Grand Junction, Mich., a postmaster sees an automobile stalled at a railroad crossing directly on the tracks, with a train bearing down. The three occupants are paralyzed by fear but the postmaster is not. He races toward it and starts pushing, clearing the tracks just as the train roars past.

These things happen too frequently and too regularly to be written off as lucky accidents. Suspecting that there may be something pretty important beneath it all, I asked psychologists and psychiatrists what conclusions they can draw.

Their answers were startling, upsetting a lot of ideas most people have been harboring about personal bravery. The answers summed up to this:

Every man has hidden well-springs of courage which can be tapped in times of crisis.

Every man has a little of the hero in him.

Every man, in short, is a great deal braver than he thinks he is.

Listen to Dr. Joseph Meiers, a New York City psychiatrist: "To me, the most remarkable fact in this question of 'courage' is that we do not expect people to be brave any more. We—that is, so-called public opinion—expect people to be ridden by fears and anxieties.

"And yet the opposite may be true. The hard-to-denry fact is that there is an innate and ever-present bravery deep inside most people."

Dr. Charles W. Collins, a well-known psychotherapist, explains it further:

"When men sit back in a quiet moment to analyze just how much courage they have or haven't got, they cannot get a true answer. A man tells himself, 'I'm afraid to do brave things because I'm afraid of getting hurt,' and he is secretly ashamed by the admission. He carries this burden of guilt around with him. He is convinced he is timid and a coward. His personality suffers.

"But he is not giving himself a fair chance. Actually, the barriers to courageous action are psychological, not physical. The nerve and the guts are there. But the fear of consequences camouflages their presence. In times of emergency, however, there is no time to construct these psychological barriers, no time to weigh the consequences. All energies are mobilized in just one direction, to act. The fears, doubts and indecisions vanish and the man's true, basic courage comes to the forefront."

Dr. Harold Kenneth Fink, a psychotherapist with the Convent Ave. Clinic and the Narcotics Rehabilitation Center, both in New York City, declares that people doubt their own bravery simply because "they don't have to use it very much in this civilized life."

But, he adds, "Even the Casper Milquetoast type of individual will forget his own security when a crisis suddenly occurs."

THE fact that a chosen few do not have a monopoly on bravery has never been more clearly shown than by the little-publicized activity of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, now rounding out a full half century. It was exactly 50 years ago that a great mine disaster took a toll of 170 lives at the Harwick Collieries in Pennsylvania. Andrew Carnegie, the steel multi-millionaire and philanthropist, was strongly affected, especially by the story of how two men died in efforts to rescue some of the trapped victims.

An idea crystallized in Carnegie's mind. There was heroism in war and heroism performed by people hired to watch over the lives of citizens. But weren't there also many heroes in everyday life who got no medals, no prizes, no recognition? And so he set aside a \$5,000,000 fund and formed a commission of 21 members to seek out these everyday folks who displayed courage, saving lives at the risk of their own.

"I do not expect to stimulate or create heroism by this fund," Carnegie

wrote, "knowing well that heroic action is impulsive; but I do believe that if the hero is injured in his bold attempt to serve or save his fellows he and those dependent on him should not suffer pecuniarily thereby."

For 50 years this self-perpetuating commission, with its corps of investigators, has selected about 80 winners annually, deliberately bypassing those who are brave in the line of duty. And the remarkable thing about it all is that far from having any trouble getting enough candidates, the commission has to wade through an avalanche of heroic deeds each year—the average running about 1,000.

WHOM have they found? School kids of ten, janitors of 70. Actors whose only heroics were confined to a Hollywood sound stage and shopkeepers who never battled anything fiercer than bargain-hunters. Businessmen whose only physical action is on the golf course on weekends and nursemaids who only fought off advances of wolves—the two-legged kind.

What has the commission learned about heroism? Is a hero any different from the guy next door?

Listen to what the commission's president has said:

"If there be something peculiar in his blood and fiber, it has not been discovered by the commission in all these years. In appearance and behavior, the hero resembles the rest of mankind."

A hero, then, is anybody. Maybe he is a radio performance tester like Earl L. Zimmerman. . . .

It was a raw March evening in 1951 when the trailer-truck Richard A. Goodman was driving near Williamsonville, N.Y., bounded out of control and smashed headlong into a utility pole. Goodman's head struck the windshield and he was knocked senseless at the wheel. The truck rocked crazily, the front was crumpled and, at the moment of impact, a tank containing 40 gallons of gasoline burst open and drenched Goodman from head to foot.

Earl Zimmerman, who was only 23, drove by just as the truck was careening toward the pole. Without hesitating, he rushed toward the wreck, jumped on the running board and grabbed the driver by the shoulder. As he did so, another gasoline tank, a 30-gallon one behind the cab seat, exploded and a hot sheet of flame rocketed high into the air.

The blast stunned Zimmerman but his fingers kept their grip on Goodman. In an instant, the driver's gas-soaked clothing roared into fire and the entire truck was soon enveloped. Other motorists reported later that the flames were so bright it hurt their eyes to look at them.

In the center of this seething, blistering inferno, his own clothing ablaze, a radio performance tester battled for a man's life, with his own in imminent peril. Zimmerman wouldn't release his hold on the driver—he got him out of the cab and, supporting him in his arms, jumped from the truck. He leaped from flames and landed in flames. Rolling, squirming, crawling, he got his man to the outer edge of the fiery circle, where other hands reached out and pulled them away.

Zimmerman lay four months in a hospital, with burns on the face, arms, hands and legs.

A hero is anybody. Maybe he is a carpenter like Jack McLane. . . .

Two boys, 14 and 17 years of age, hiked one day up to the mouth of an extinct volcano five miles from a small town in the southwest. On top was the volcano vent, a bottomless pit which ran, with many twists and turns, deep into the bowels of the earth. The younger lad approached the four-foot wide mouth and looked curiously into the yawning cavity. And then it happened.

The earth under his feet crumbled and down he plummeted, vainly grabbing at the rocky ledges as he dropped. The youth at the rim, panic-stricken, leaned over as far as he dared, hearing his friend's screams grow fainter and fainter. Finally they stopped.

The boy rushed back to town and breathlessly told his story to John McLane. "Let's go," said the carpenter, who had a wife and five small children. McLane knew all about that deep, perilous vent. He knew about the rattlers that infested the place, about the bats that made their lairs inside. He knew, too, that the only steel cable in town was a rusty half-inch that could easily be slashed by the sharp lava edges on the sides of the vent. But there was a boy down there and he might be alive. "Let's go," he repeated.

At the volcano, McLane made the cable fast and, with several men standing by, started his descent. Within half an hour he had reached the boy, who lay in a stupor on an eight-foot ledge 168 feet below the surface. Bat dung four feet thick had broken his fall, but he was severely cut and bruised and an arm and rib were broken. He was lucky, at that—from the ledge where he had landed, the vent opened down into a great cave extending an unknown distance into the earth.

And now the perilous ascent began. McLane reached down and gently lifted the boy, who suddenly revived and went berserk. Screaming wildly that rattlesnakes were encircling him, he flailed out with both legs and his one good arm. McLane held the

cable with one hand, the boy with the other and struggled against dense clouds of pungent dust which choked and blinded him. Finally, the boy fainted and McLane acted fast.

He put the youth's left leg through one of the rope loops attached to the end of the cable, thrust his own leg in the other loop, wound rope around both their bodies and attached it to the cable between them. Then he jerked the signal rope and the men on the surface began hauling them up.

It was an inch-by-inch gain for all of the 168 feet. The cable kept dislodging foul dung from the vent's sides, showering McLane and his unconscious burden. Bats flew around him and their hisses, which sounded like rattlesnakes in the darkness, increased the terror. Even worse was the danger that at any moment the razor edges of ledges would eat through the rusted cable and send them both into the blackness.

But the carpenter held the boy fast and finally they squirmed up the top. There was a deep, nasty gash on McLane's knee, two others on his head and blood was spurting from his ears and nose. He was a sick man for an entire month but recovered fully. And the boy? Sound as a dollar after a while.

A HERO is anybody. Maybe he is a radio performance tester like Zimmerman, a carpenter like McLane or maybe a farmer like Harold F. Keith. . . .

It was a day in late Fall not long ago in Mason City, Ill., that the terrifying news broke. A snarling 400-pound tiger had escaped from a private zoo and was prowling the streets. No one knew where it was lurking—a cellar, an alley, an abandoned shed. But this much authorities could say and it froze the entire city with fear: The tiger hadn't been fed for many hours, was ravenously hungry and would attack on sight.

Keith heard the news and make no mistake, he was scared. No one wants to beard a hungry tiger. But there was business to be done and Keith couldn't barricade himself indoors all day. Out he went.

He never expected to meet the tiger, he never wanted to, but meet him he did. Rounding a deserted corner, he came suddenly upon the beast who at the moment was growling ominously at Leslie E. Mather, Sr., an elderly man who was cowering against a building. The tiger lunged forward, seized Mather's leg in his jaws. And then Keith acted.

He looked around, spotted a four-foot auto drive shaft in a mechanic's shop nearby and grabbed it. He stepped in, swung and the drive shaft

thudded on the tiger's head. The great beast, startled, dropped Mather's leg and turned on Keith. Again the farmer swung and the enraged tiger's teeth scraped his sleeve. Slowly he beat the beast back and finally came the blow that kayoed the animal. Keith, breathing heavily, dropped the drive shaft and went to the aid of the injured Mather.

A HERO is anyone. Maybe he is an auto parts clerk like Donal A. Wallace. . . .

Little Susan Goss was taking a twilight stroll with her grandfather at Multnomah Falls, Ore., when she strayed off by herself and walked onto the railroad tracks. Suddenly she looked up at a train whirling toward her at tremendous speed.

Susan froze. The whistle shrieked, but she couldn't move. The engineer applied his brakes, but there wasn't a chance in the world that he could stop in time. Susan's life was going to be snuffed out in less than a half minute unless someone acted or a miracle happened.

There was no miracle. But there was action. Wallace, only 20, took it all in with a glance. He darted onto the tracks and reached Susan with the train scarcely 200 feet away. He grabbed the little girl's arm but now, with only a few seconds left, Susan—completely panicked—resisted and jerked backward. Wallace slipped and almost fell. The train loomed bigger and bigger in front of them.

And now Wallace, still holding Susan's arm, grasped the handle of a retaining wall and pulled the child from the track just as the train hurtled by. With a clearance of only 18 inches, Wallace clutched the little girl against the wall. Cinders spat-tered against them, smoke belched in their faces and the noise of the train was ear-splitting as it caromed past them. But it passed by, not over them, and the little girl was alive.

Alive because of a 20-year-old auto parts clerk. An anybody.

"Anybodys" can be lame, halt and even blind. A handicap doesn't stop bravery. . . .

Samuel E. Sansevere, a cargo checker, proved it. He's 25 and wears an artificial leg. When a longshoreman toppled from a pier into the oily waters at Hoboken, N. J., Sansevere didn't stop to think that he was handicapped. He simply bent, unbuckled the artificial limb and dived into the water. Swiftly he swam to the dock worker's side and hauled him in.

Mary C. Yowell, who is 66, proved it too. And her handicap was greater. She's blind.

It happened in Fort Smith, Ark. A nurse who was preparing some broth for a sick elderly woman suddenly

felt faint and collapsed, falling across the gas stove. In a moment her uniform was ablaze. The agitated patient could do nothing to help her, but she did reach the telephone. Help had to come fast, so she called upstairs and spoke to Miss Yowell.

The sightless Miss Yowell came. She descended the stairs, groped her way into the apartment, went into the kitchen and grabbed the nurse from the stove. Then, oblivious to personal peril, she rolled with her on the floor until the blaze was put out. . . .

Proof exists by the barrelful and yet, amazingly, the "anybodys" in the world just don't believe that people are brave by nature. In London during the last war, a British government official put his finger squarely on this almost universal lack of self-appreciation while he was chatting with a group of correspondents outside the American embassy. I was in the group and I still remember what he said:

"We seldom recognize the fact that people are more courageous than either we, or they, suppose. We see it only in flashes, as when a stranger steps in front of a motor car to save a child. Then we applaud the heroic act but do not apply it to ourselves. A great war comes along and civilians exhibit almost incredible courage. We go about our daily business as the buzz bombs drop, we save our neighbors when bombs shatter homes, we face perils daily to feed and clothe our children. Then, when the war ends, we again refuse to accept the fact that we are courageous and again applaud the brave deeds of others."

How about this much-talked-about but actually little understood quality of "super-human strength?" What, exactly, is it and who has it?

Don't be too surprised to hear that you have it!

Scientists, you see, tell you that every human being, given the right set of circumstances, is capable of exerting infinitely greater strength and endurance than he ever thought he possessed.

Under great emotional stress, the glands of the body, particularly the thyroid and the adrenal, are stimulated far beyond their normal output. The adrenals, for example, pump greater quantities of adrenalin into the system and permit the individual to run faster and farther, pick up weights he never thought he could, down an adversary he believed to be far more powerful.

And it's not only states of panic that pour added strength into the body. Dr. Fink, the psychotherapist, told me he was in California one day when he got word from New York that his father was seriously ill. For several reasons, he could only make

the trip by car, and off he started on the 3,300-mile journey.

"Ordinarily," he told me, "it's a ten-day or two-week thing, maybe a week if you really push. I drove the distance in less than four days, sometimes driving 23 and a half out of the 24 hours, catching ten-minute naps by the roadside and taking off again. You can do it if you have to. You can do lots of things if you have to."

Take the case of Paul V. Jenner, of Chicago. Jenner now runs a jewelry shop in Wisconsin but two years ago he was a clerk in a large jewelry store in his home town. Look at Jenner and see a wisp of a man, scarcely 120 pounds and about five feet four inches in height, with biceps like pipe stems.

On a fog-shrouded October night, Jenner was carrying three uncut gems valued at \$5,000 when he was throttled from behind by an assailant. It was the old mugging technique. The arm tightened around his throat, and a voice grated in his ear: "Just relax, bub, I'll take the stuff." Jenner relaxed—and then he heaved.

The amazed mugger felt his man squirm out of his grip and then he howled in anguish as a head butted him in the stomach. He fell gasping to the ground as Jenner streaked away. The little jeweler's assistant explained later to police:

"I was planning to open my own jewelry store. I had saved just enough money for it and was going to make the move in a couple of months. I couldn't let this happen to me at this time. It meant my whole future. I had to get out of that guy's grip."

Jenner just had to. And he did.

SUPER-HUMAN strength is anybody's gift. School kids and women, too. Take Mattie Youngs Woods, an Arkansas housewife. . . .

Mrs. Woods looked out of her window one May evening and saw flames shooting from a neighbor's home. She rushed over and entered the burning building. Flames covered the ceilings and wall, the heat was intense. Pain seared her face and hands but she knew there were children in the bedrooms. So, despite the agony she was suffering, she entered the bedrooms and, one by one, dragged each child to safety. She had to. And did.

Then there was the amazing feat performed by a surveyor who was alone in a handcar when an off-schedule train loomed suddenly in front of him. He thought rapidly: He could certainly leap from the handcar and save his own life, but what about the lives of the persons on the train, which would crumple in a devastating wreck? There was just one other way out.

The surveyor halted his car, got off and, with a mighty heave, lifted it

clear off the track, out of the way of the onrushing express. Later he tried to duplicate the feat. Try as he might, he couldn't even budge the half-ton handcar. He couldn't because he didn't have to—but when he did have to, he could.

There are innumerable stories, too, of people who undergo what would appear to be unbearable pain when the chips are down and action is imperative. One man, who suffered a compound fracture of his left leg in leaping from a burning building, stood stolidly on his right leg as his wife dropped each of his four children, one after another, into his waiting arms. It was a two-story fall and he caught each one.

It brings up an important point. In moments of stress, when "super-human strength" is operating, pain is relegated to the background. Doctors tell you that the amount of pain you feel depends on your "interest level" at the moment.

You've heard of soldiers severely wounded in action, who didn't feel the shock until after. Dr. Robert Gillespie, Royal Air Force psychiatrist in England, once told the story of a British airman who was engaged in a fierce dogfight. During the excitement, he heard a curious thud inside his cockpit. He glanced down—and saw his own right arm on the plane floor! It had been shot off in the battle, and he hadn't been aware of it.

Doctors, too, point to boxers in the middle of fights. Don't they feel intense pain when the blows land? They don't, because of the high "interest level" in the engagement at hand. And you can prove it by your own experiences—haven't you felt a headache at one time or another and then been diverted by an interesting sight or conversation, and then wondered where the headache went. It had been there all the time, but you weren't conscious of it. And don't you feel headaches more keenly at night, when you're trying to sleep, than during the day when you are occupied by work?

Pain, then, is physiological, but it's psychological as well; and the "anybodys" who go into heroic action on the spur of the moment don't feel it nearly as much as you think.

You put all these facts together and they add up to a pretty wonderful conclusion. When people get in trouble, they get help. From the ones trained in heroism if they're around at the moment—from just plain people if they're not. From passersby, motorists and neighbors. Any of these might suddenly find himself a hero.

You might, too. And that's because you're a whole lot braver than you think.



ESCAPE FROM DEATH

■ Back in September 1946, Emily Abernathy, librarian at the Brian, Ohio, public library, was murdered while working late one evening. The crime was a brutal one and appeared to be without motive. There was no evidence of a criminal attack and certainly robbery was not apparent. Even jealousy was discounted by the police when it was discovered Miss Abernathy had few boy friends, none serious minded. The lovely girl was strangled and stabbed several times. Citizens of the town were shocked and the younger girls were terrified to be out after dark. After three days the police had been unable to make an arrest, and there was a great fear the assassin might strike again.

One evening a young high school girl who had gone to a movie late in the afternoon, emerged to find she had stayed later than she expected. It was dusk. In the business area the streets were well lighted and there were numerous people around, but she remembered that before she reached home there would be several long stretches between the lights where the way would be dark.

As the girl hesitated, thinking of the murder of Miss Abernathy only a few days previously, she became panic-stricken and decided to telephone her home and ask her father to come for her.

About to enter a drug store to use the public telephone, someone behind her spoke. Turning, she recognized a classmate whom she had dated several times during the past year. They talked a few minutes, then the youth suggested he walk home with her.

"Golly, Jimmy," she said, gratefully, "it's swell you came along just when you did. I was going to phone my father to come for me." The girl laughed nervously. "I guess it's silly, but I was afraid to walk home in the dark because . . . because of the murder of Emily Abernathy. Poor Emily. I just couldn't help thinking that terrible man might catch me, too."

As they started along the sidewalk, Jimmy, a slender redhead of about twenty, chuckled bashfully. "Sure, I'll go home with you. It's a dangerous thing for girls like you to be alone after dark with a murderer loose. Don't worry, I'll take care of you."

Fifteen minutes later they reached the girl's home and after talking to her companion a brief time and thanking him, she went inside.

The next day, when the evening paper was delivered, the girl read the headlines and fainted.

The story said that Jim Engle, her companion of the long walk home in the dark the night before, had confessed to the murder of Emily Abernathy.

—Horace Bailey Brown



The

Illustrated by STAN DRAKE

Tournament

There are many things a man can do to his son, perhaps the worst of which is to try to make him into a champion golfer.

By NOEL HOUSTON



When the burly man in a tartan jacket and gabardine slacks busted into my office at the rear of the golf shop without knocking, he caught me by surprise. I was pouring my mid-morning nip into a paper cup. Fortunately for me, he wasn't a member. He had the look of a man who had made his money, and plenty of it, the hard way—tight mouth, gimlet gray eyes and bulging jaw muscles. About fifty-five, with silver hair and a ruddy tan.

"You're Sam Teagle, the pro here?"

I nodded, putting the fifth of bourbon back into my desk with elaborate casual-

ness. There was an arrogance in his manner that got my dander up. I forgot that, though, when he pulled out a gold-trimmed wallet and counted out five \$20 bills on my desk.

"For what?" I said, putting my hands behind my head.

"For seeing to it my son gets your best caddy next week."

He referred to the All-South Amateur tournament, which was to start over our course at Pine Prospect Country Club on Monday morning.

"Just like that." It was annoying to have a guy walk in and presume he could

bribe me with a hundred bucks. My annoyance was complicated, however, by the thought of an almost-empty case of bourbon in my broom closet and the fact that I didn't have the dough to replace it, due to a bad week at canasta in the game room.

"Somebody'll get him," the big man said irritably. "Why not me?"

"Your son'll get a good caddy. All our boys know their jobs."

"I said the best. By which I mean the one that best knows this terrain, the distances, and most of all, the roll of the greens. I mean a boy by name of Punkin Something. Punkin Carter."

"What made you think of him? You know Punkin?"

"I asked the room clerk at the Inn, the bellhop, the waiter, and the magazine-stand girl. They all said Punkin. Were they right?"

"Well, he caddies for me." The guy glanced scornfully at the paper

named Andrew. You've heard of him?"

I vaguely remembered seeing the name Andrew Moffitt in some of the newspaper stories of various tournaments around the country. "Yes, nice golfer. Let's see, he copped the—"

"No," Moffitt said defensively. "He's only nineteen, but he's been swinging a club since he was ten." His voice got an angry note in it. "We went to the quarter-finals in the Allegheny Invitational this spring, and up to the semi-finals in a couple of Florida tournaments last winter. Before that, we—"

"Why is he going to win this one—the really tough one?"

Moffitt's jaws clenched. "He wins—or else."

"Else?"

Moffitt smiled a kind of man-to-man smile. "You know, a boy that has an old man who indulges him, is likely to take things a little easy. This time Andrew's got a reason for really wanting to win."

"A girl?"

"No, no," Moffitt said impatiently. "I've told him he brings home this cup to put on our library mantel, he gets to go abroad to study. He doesn't, he comes into my office with me."

"And you mean it?"

"Absolutely." Those jaws snapped together in a way that left no doubt.

Though I'd never seen the boy, and had no interest in him, I was beginning to get the picture. Father who always wanted to be a big-shot athlete in himself, never was able to, but still hankered for the one thing that had eluded him. Projects his ambition through his kid, buying him the finest lessons, keeping him everlastingly at the drudgery of practice, trying to make it surer by bribing for top caddies, pushing the kid toward something the kid probably doesn't want—just so he can get the satisfaction of feeling he's a champion himself. There wasn't a question in my mind, Moffitt wanted that All-South cup up on his mantel so he could stick out his chest and feel the equal of Sam Snead. To get that cup he was willing to deprive the boy of what the boy wanted most in life. Nice guy.

"Your son wants to go to Europe to study piano? Or be a painter?"

"Of course not! He wants to teach ancient history, if you can imagine it, as much as there is going on in the world today. It's all he thinks about. Wants to travel the Mediterranean countries. Study at some university in Athens. Be a college professor."

"Well, it's a living. And you're in the construction business?"

"Where do you get these ideas? I'm a cotton broker."

I decided I wasn't going to do it to

Punkin. Tournaments come and go, but your club remains, and in some ways Punkin had a vested interest at the club that exceeded mine or the members'. I wasn't going to break my promise to Punkin for a measly-hundred dollars. I didn't think I was. The five twenties did make a pretty pile on my desk.

"The truth is, Mr. Moffitt," I said with an effort, "I've already sort of lined Punkin up with another player."

"What kind of a place is this," said Moffitt, "where you play favorites and assign somebody a caddy ahead of time?" He saw the absurdity of his complaint, and grinned. "I'm not used to haggling over the services of a colored boy. Especially one that's going to be rewarded better than he ever was in his life. Either yes or no."

After all, when I made that silly half-promise to Punkin I hadn't known anything like this would come up: I needed that dough. And the way this Moffitt handed out money, Punkin was going to have an exceedingly profitable round or two. I picked up the twenties. "Hope you take home your cup. It's good-sized. But I suppose you've got a big mantel."

Moffitt turned and walked out.

I took a swallow out of the paper cup and carried it over to the window. Moffitt was heading for a gray fish-tail convertible. A young fellow got out and held the door open. To my surprise, Moffitt patted the lad on the shoulder as he got in. Very likely he had a real affection for his son, in spite of his blind spot. I wondered if the boy knew why his father had stopped off at my office. I decided he didn't.

He was a bareheaded, slender kid, almost frail. Probably the old man had first hoped he'd be a halfback. When the boy turned out to be on the slight side, he'd had to settle for golf. But as the lad came around the car heading for the driver's side, he pushed his fingers through his pale yellow hair and I saw that he had a good, strong wrist.

I took another swallow and looked the other way out my window, toward the hedged-in yard where the caddies were reading comics or shooting craps. Over at the far side old Punkin lay stretched out on a bench, his hat over his eyes, one overalled leg—his game one—hanging down, soaking the sun into his bones.

Nobody seeing that sprawled figure would have guessed that he was looking at a master of the royal and ancient game. Plenty of caddies know the shots better than the Sunday golfers they carry for, but Punkin's calm judgment had saved even veteran pros from disaster. I'd always figured in his younger days Punkin

LAUGHING MATTER

At least the TV comic show
Has ended what, on radio,

I used to fret and bark about.
No longer, now that I can see,
Will audiences laugh with glee
At things I'm in the dark about.

—Richard Armour

cup on my desk. It made me sore. "And he's carried for some pretty good players. Sarazen, Horton Smith, Byron Nelson, Jimmy Demaret, to name a few. Walter Hagen always asked for him. I never heard any complaints."

"Hagen? How old is this boy, anyway?"

"Oh, fifty-two, fifty-five. Punkin was here the day the club opened, he says, back in 1912. Matter of fact, Punkin's got so old, I doubt you'd be satisfied with him. He's slowed down, got a game leg—"

"I don't care if he has to go around in a wheel chair, so long as he knows this course by heart."

"He does. And that's the point. He's got seniority. He's entitled to get a player who has a good chance of lasting several rounds at least. For the dough in it."

"He'll be taken care of. And he'll be caddying for the winner."

I smiled. "I don't believe I caught the name."

"Jefferson J. Moffitt. My son's

could have been a competitor known from Pebble Beach to St. Andrews—if he had been white. But Punkin'd had to be content to tote the bag and play the ball at secondhand. Which hadn't kept him from having a pipe dream, even in his fifties. When he told me of his dream, I kidded him. Then I got a little sad and agreed to give him a hand.

I crushed the cup and tossed it at my wastebasket. I didn't want to think about Punkin. I just wanted to stay out of his way.

BUT I forgot to do that when the qualifying round started Monday. Maybe because my head was fuzzy from the shindig the All-South Amateur Association threw at the Inn Sunday night.

Punkin caught me between the golf shop and the first tee, where a striped tent had been set up and the 130-odd hopefuls were going off in threesomes. He shuffled up in his old slashed brogans, carrying a handsome brown leather bag with 15 beautiful clubs. The name Andrew Moffitt was gold-stamped on the side.

"Mr. Teagle," Punkin said apologetically. He had on stiff, clean overalls and an old yellow sports shirt of mine I'd given him, and he was wearing his lucky hat, a mashed porkpie with a frayed feather, which a member had given him after a good round one time.

"Okay, Punkin, what is it?" I said. "I'm in a hurry."

"Yes sir," he agreed, "but I understand, sir, I was going to carry for Mr. Henry Smithson. I told Mr. Pete, but he said he didn't know nothing about it."

"Doggone it, Punkin," I said regretfully, "I guess I forgot to mention it to ol' Caddymaster. Who are you with?"

"A young gentleman name of Mr. Moffitt."

"Oh, rich boy. You'll pick up a nice piece of change there."

"That ain't the point, Mr. Teagle." He turned his bloodhound eyes up to me. I found the pennants fluttering on the tent more interesting to look at. "Like we was talking about," Punkin went on politely, "the All-South's been played here at Pine Prospect just three times in my life. I never carried for the winner. I wanted to just once before I'm through. I figure I might not be around next time it comes here."

"I know. Sort of play like you won the title."

"Mr. Smithson, he's almost bound to—"

"He's a tightwad, Punkin. You'll make more carrying one round for Moffitt than you would going the route with Smithson."

"That just ain't the point, Mr. Teagle." Punkin's persistence began to make me sore. "I know it's a crazy ol' idea nobody would understand, but I kind of thought you knew the way I feel."

"It looks to me," I said, "like everybody wants to pretend he's going to be the champ of this tourney rather than one of the guys working at it. A caddy's job is to tote that bag and hand out the clubs one at a time when he's asked for 'em. That's what he's paid for. Maybe you're getting to think yourself too important. Maybe, Punkin, you'd better count yourself again and find out you ain't so many."

"Yes sir." Punkin turned away and shuffled back to the first tee.

The whole thing made me sick. Punkin and I had been friends for years, and I'd never spoken to him like that. I decided it was the hangover. I went back to my office for a hair of the dog. . . .

The qualifying round went off under a hard, brilliant sun. When the field of 32 for the first round of match play was posted I saw that some unknown had freaked a 67 to be medalist, but I was interested in Smithson, on whom I intended to get a few bets down.

Henry Smithson was the heavy favorite, and for good reason. A tough, flea-bitten guy of about 30, he had once been a caddy somewhere around Chicago. He had an excellent game and was a mean competitor. Smithson didn't care about loving cups. He made his living by going from one tournament to another and betting on himself, round by round, and, finally, to win. A professional gambler, making a better living at his trade than a good many out-and-out circuit pros. He didn't give a whoop that few people liked him. Neither did I, if he could bring in a few simoleons for me.

I was glad to see that Smithson, set in the upper bracket, had cruised around in a nice 70. Punkin's man, I noticed, got in with a 74, and was posted in the lower bracket.

AT the Inn dinner that night, where the qualifiers were bid for in the Calcutta pool—the holder of which ever player copped the title to get the pot—Smithson naturally drew the top price, \$850. He was bought by a club member, Art Lefler, whom I later persuaded to sell me a \$100 slice. I was amused by Andrew Moffitt's father. Bidding for young Moffitt started at \$25 and hung at \$60. The senior Moffitt then boomed out a bid of \$150 from his table. If he thought to light up some interest in the boy he was mistaken. The surprised auctioneer banged his gavel and cried, "Sold, for one hundred and fifty."

Smithson met a pudgy gent in his forties the first round, and knocked him off 6 up and 5 holes left to play. That gave him the rest of the day in the clubhouse, where he did well for himself in the crap game. He did all right for me, too, for I rode with him all afternoon.

For Punkin's sake, I looked at the board to see if Moffitt had survived the first round. He had, 2 up.

I managed to stir out on the course Wednesday, and watched Smithson play a couple of holes. He was having an easy time against an ordinarily good player from Virginia who was intimidated by Smithson's cocksure personality. I cut back toward the clubhouse, and happened to run across Punkin and his Andrew Moffitt, who was matched with a lad from the Alabama University golf team. The senior Moffitt, tagging along, tight-mouthed and frowning, acknowledged my greeting only with a nod. I watched Moffitt hit an iron to the 12th green. Nice swing. I waited at the spot until Punkin came back alone with the divot.

"How's it going?"

"We're 4 up," Punkin said. "We'll take this one."

"The father giving you any trouble?"

Punkin glanced quickly at me, then dropped the divot in place and stepped on it. "No sir," he said, and followed after the players.

I WASN'T surprised when Smithson easily disposed of the medalist in the quarter-finals, but I was when I heard Moffitt had won his quarter-final match. He met Hank Goforth, a competitor who had copped the Trans-Mississippi and the Western Amateur, and was about to turn pro. Moffitt took Goforth 2 and 1, and Goforth told me he didn't have a bad day, either. "That skinny kid was too rough for me," Hank Goforth said ruefully as he soaped himself in the shower.

I went outside and found Punkin leaving the caddy yard. "I told you you had quite a player."

Punkin pursed his lips and looked out over the course where the pines slanted long shadows. "Well, Mr. Andrew's got the shots, all right. And," he added with quiet pride, "he take my suggestions."

"What's wrong, then?"

"I don't ever talk against nobody." Punkin was giving the colored man's advance warning when asked to comment on a white man. "But we been playing several days now. I been trying to figure how my man is this way and that way, like I do, so I can help him good when he needs it. And Mr. Teagle—they's a couple of things bother me some."

"Such as?"

"Well, Mr. Teagle—" Punkin put a hand over his heart. "Don't none of it seem to come from here. He makes a shot a certain way 'cause that's the *right* way. But seem like he's in a dream about it. He don't really *mean* it. I just don't know how far a man can go that way. Besides—" Punkin paused. He wanted me to say it.

"Mr. Papa? Is he still dogging you?"

"I guess that's a mighty fine man. But I sure wish he had business elsewhere. He so nervous, he getting to be a worry. Wish we could go along working this thing out by us-selves."

Punkin flashed a grin to show me he was joking. But I knew. Moffitt couldn't keep from passing on his increasing tenseness. He had to offer advice. No wonder the boy had so often been a bridesmaid but never a bride. He could play golf, but he couldn't carry his father on his back all the way. And Punkin had read the pitch exactly.

"See you tomorrow, Mr. Teagle." Punkin touched his porkpie hat in farewell. "Tomorrow we start the semi-finals, the 36-hole stuff, the long, long grind, and—" he looked up at the white-flaked sky, "—she gonna come on a rain, worse luck." He ambled off for home, a shack he'd built long ago back in the woods, a mile or so from the club.

It did rain, and in the downpour Smithson nearly got tossed out of the tourney. I sweated, and it wasn't all from wearing a trench coat. Smithson met Jack Hix, a pretty fair golfer but not that good, and Hix had Smithson 4 down at the 30th hole. Maybe the crap game running till 3 A.M. didn't help Smithson any. But his cold calculation came to his aid, and Hix began to fade. Smithson took him with a bogey on the 37th when Hix blew high as the dripping sky.

When I got back to my office I didn't wait to peel out of my trench coat. I tilted up the bottle and took five gulps before I dared quit and ask my nerves to behave.

I was standing there like that when Moffitt came in, his transparent slicker swishing. That guy never bothered to knock. He looked out from under the hood so angrily I knew young Moffitt had finally taken the count.

"That caddy!" he griped. "I thought you said he was good."

"You asked for him."

"Don't try to blame me! You should have seen him on the 32nd hole. A perfect 5-iron shot, which Andrew wanted to play with a 5-iron, and that caddy forced a 4-iron on him. It carried clear over the green. Any

fool would have known it. It cost us the hole."

"And the match?"

"No, no. We won the match. But I want you to speak to that caddy. He's too officious. Here Andrew is right up to the finals, the farthest we've ever gone, and he's got Andrew nervous. I want him to—"

"Just carry the bag?"

"No, no. Why do you keep putting words in my mouth? I just don't want him calling a 4-iron distance on a 5-iron shot."

"I'll speak to him," I said wearily.

"You tell him for me if he pulls a bonehead like that tomorrow I'll have his skin."

I went around and asked Punkin what happened. He grinned, standing there soaking wet. "I made a mistake. I gave him a 4-iron instead of a 5 'cause I didn't want him to press. He presses, he hooks. The boy was so keyed up he really laid into that ball. He'll never hit another 4-iron like that and neither will nobody."

"Okay, Punkin. Well, how do you think Moffitt will stand up against Smithson tomorrow?"

Punkin sighed. "That boy is such a bundle of nerves I doubt he even show up on the tee. If he do, I look for him to shoot a even hundred and forty-four. He's come a long, long road."

"Him and Papa." Punkin didn't answer. I slapped his shoulder. "Stay with him, Punkin."

"Yes sir. But after all, he got to swing the club himself."

"He'll have reasons to swing tomorrow. One is, he loses he'll have to sit at a desk next to his father the rest of his life."

Punkin's eyes opened. "Is that a fact? Got to sit right next to him all his life, hunh?"

"The boy wants to go to a university across the ocean, then come back and be a professor, all on his own. The old man says he has to win this one or no dice."

Punkin's face drooped with thought. He looked at his feet and wriggled them so the water in his brogans squished. "Didn't know all that." He looked up at me. "Tell you, Mr. Teagle. I ain't one to brag. But that boy going to his university. He's a good boy. He's going to be a professor if it's the last thing I ever do."

As I walked away, skirting the puddles, I wondered if I had opened my mouth so wide I had cost myself more bucks than I wanted to count up. But I shrugged it off. It would take more than a scared boy, an apoplectic father, and a limping Negro to beat Henry Smithson. . . .

Saturday broke fine and clear. Nearly 2,500 people turned out to

watch the championship match. And contrary to Punkin's foreboding, Andrew Moffitt showed up at the tee, looking fit. His father showed up, too, looking like he had been sentenced to hang.

I walked the first hole with the crowd. It was halved in pars, and I went back to the press tent, where the association had thoughtfully provided a small bar. I knew they'd be back eventually.

When they came in for lunch, though, I had a rude shock. After 18 holes Smithson was only one up. I heard it had been ding-dong all the way.

A little disturbed, I found Smithson in the locker room, putting on a fresh shirt. "Nice going," I said, meaning, "What happened?"

"What the hell is this?" Smithson said angrily, wiping his freckled face with a towel. "Here I'm three under par for 18 holes and I'm only one up. Who is this punk, anyway?"

"Just a kid who freaked hot," I assured him, taking the towel and wiping my own face. "He's shot his wad. You'll take him."

"I know that. But I don't like to work this hard." He stuffed in his shirt and strode out to the grill.

I WONDERED if I shouldn't hedge some of my bets on Smithson. I went around to the caddies' refreshment shack and called Punkin to one side.

"How's your boy?" I asked, smiling.

"Tired," Punkin said soberly.

"Nervous tired."

"He's playing well, though?"

"He's still got all his shots."

"Looks like he might possibly take Smithson yet, hunh?"

Punkin gulped another bite of his hamburger and slowly shook his head. "Airplane look mighty pretty sailing up there—till she sputter and run out of gas. Then—zreeng, down she come."

"That going to happen?"

Punkin wiped the catsup off his mouth with the back of his hand. "Not if I can help it," he said quietly.

I still didn't know whether to unload some of those bets. I was sore at Smithson. He was supposed to be a better golfer than that.

When they came in on No. 9 again, the 27th hole of the match, I felt better. Smithson had increased his lead to 2 up. Moffitt might hold on, but with only nine to go he would never win a net of three holes from a hand like Smithson.

I decided to walk the last nine with the gallery, though I don't enjoy tension. I've got a nervous stomach.

They halved three holes in pars, then both bogeyed the 31st, Moffitt hooking his drive into the woods and Smithson missing a chance to virtual-

ly sew it up by coming short out of a trap.

I found myself walking beside Punkin. "You still around?" I kidded.

"Going to be," Punkin drawled, "if I can get that boy to quit pressing his tee shots. I tell him ain't no use trying to match that tall boy's distance, but Pappy sidles up and say, 'Hit it out in front of him, son,' and the boy does so—into the woods."

Smithson was a mile down the middle off the 32nd tee. After a whispered word, J. J. Moffitt stepped back from his son. Young Moffitt's ball took off straight, then bent for the woods, where it bounded back fifty yards off a tree and stopped at the edge. With the hole slightly doglegging to the left, you could see that the only hope to reach the green was a long, hooked brassie. I wouldn't have given a nickel for his lie. The ball set up nicely on a scuffed bunch of pine needles, but a little in front an ugly root snaked across.

Andrew Moffitt stood looking down at it, biting his lip, and running his fingers through his hair. His father edged up, but Andrew turned to his caddy. "What do you think, Punkin?"

Punkin promptly handed him his brassie.

"But I'll hit that root on the follow through," Andrew protested. His voice was high and strained.

"We's got money," Punkin said. "We can buy us a new club."

The crowd chuckled and Andrew smiled. The folks also stepped back to avoid flying fragments. As Andrew prepared to address the ball, Punkin said softly, "This time we do hit with all we got."

The club head missed the root by a hair. Punkin had known it would. The long ball hooked nicely into the green. The crowd gave Andrew a hand, and he went on to get his half.

The next hole, an unusual par 4, turned a 90-degree left angle 200 yards from the tee. Smithson set his ball down perfectly out there. As Moffitt started his downswing, a woman laughed at somebody's whispered joke. He flubbed miserably. He was in the middle, but a long way from the turn. I looked at Punkin. He walked off the tee without a change of expression.

The only sensible way to play Andrew's ball was to pitch on down to the turn, then hope to approach close enough for one putt. But as I came up Punkin was handing Andrew his 3-wood and pointing the line to the unseen green over the forest of towering pines.

In spite of my pulling for Smithson, I wanted to cry, "No, Punkin." I glanced at J. J. Moffitt. His face was like a fire truck.



A little disturbed, I found Smithson in the locker room, changing shirts. "Nice going," I said, meaning, "What happened?" He glared at me. "What the hell is this?" he said angrily. "Here I'm three under par for 18 holes and I'm only one up. Who is this punk, anyway?"

Andrew got the ball up over the first pines, though whether he had the distance to carry to the green we didn't know until a part of the crowd that had gone on ahead let out a cheer.

As we walked on, I said over Punkin's shoulder, "What in the name of seven saints made you risk that?"

"Halves do us no good now," he mumbled. "We got to gamble for wins."

"But didn't you know that shot can't be made?"

Punkin looked back with a small smile. "I remember Mr. Hagen was laying right there, back in 1923, and he went over."

"But realize how much taller those trees are now!"

Punkin slapped his head in dismay and hurried on to see if the ball had actually reached the green.

It lay 20 feet from the pin. But Punkin's gamble on the great shot didn't help, after all, for while Smithson got his par, Moffitt missed an 18-inch putt. He was 3 down, 3 to go. That, for my money, was the match.

I felt happy, financially, but I admired the fight Andrew and Punkin had put up. I got close as they walked toward the next tee to see how they were taking the way the door had been shut in their faces.

"Sorry I didn't play any better for you today," Andrew was saying to Punkin in his gentlemanly, well-modulated voice.

"We ain't lost yet, has we?" Punkin's hoarse purr.

Moffitt smiled ruefully. "I'm afraid I know when I'm beaten."

"Well, sir," Punkin replied. "I remember my old mammy, she used to say, 'When it's the darkest, it got to get brighter.'"

Andrew laughed. "That's a good thought, all right." I noticed whenever Punkin made Andrew laugh, he got less tense.

"There's just a chance, Mr. Andrew, the ol' freckle-faced boy going to get to thinking he got this thing won. Your mammy ever tell you about the rabbit in the race thought that?"

"A long time ago," Andrew said quietly. "When she was still alive."

"Let's watch that old jackrabbit, see if he gone to sleep."

A little miracle staved off the end momentarily. Smithson stood on the tee of the short water hole and carelessly topped his ball into the bulrushes. He laid the next one on, up close and got his four, but it was too late, for by then Andrew had his three.

"That's one we don't have to worry about no more," Punkin grinned. "Now we shoots first, we don't have to press our tee shot, do we?"

Andrew didn't press, and laid his approach up so close that Smithson, after missing his 12-footer, picked up and said, "Let's get on."

The long par 5 18th—or 36th—fairway sloped to a cattail-choked brook, then climbed 60 yards to a trapped green. Narrow and woods-lined, with a downhill lie for the second shot.

Andrew again got that fatal hook. He drove long and deep into the woods. Smithson was down the middle, where he could reach the green with a spoon. Andrew had so many trees around him it appeared all he could hope for was a safety shot to the fairway.

I stayed with Punkin to show him I was on his side. J. J. Moffitt stood a little way off, a puzzled look on his face. He had given up a couple of holes back, and now he didn't know what to think.

"Well, we came farther than I expected," Andrew said cheerfully, looking down at his ball in the pine straw. "I guess this tears it."

"I don't know about that, sir," Punkin said absently, his eyes on Smithson out in the fairway. "We's breathing free and easy now, and that ol' boy, he's all choked up. He's real worried. Let's watch what he do before we decide for us."

It was something to watch, unless you had five hundred bucks riding on it. A dub couldn't have topped that spoon shot worse. The cut ball scampered, bounced, and dribbled right down into the cattails. Smithson stared after it incredulously. He hadn't made a shot like that before in his life, even when he was six years old.

Punkin was already talking. "Now see that little opening right through there? We just take this 6-iron and pitch nice and easy right down in front of the creek."

Andrew played it, then chipped over the brook and up on the green, to lie 18 feet from the pin. Smithson had to drop back to the hazard, and was so bewildered by then that he knocked the ball into a trap on the right. Pale under his freckles, he strode into the sand and flailed away twice before he got the ball up on the green.

He didn't go up. He left his caddy

to pick up the ball and walked toward the first tee, over on the other side of the clubhouse.

The crowd gave Andrew a hand for his courageous comeback to tie up the game after almost certain defeat. I doubt if a single one of them gave a thought to the Negro limping beside him.

Smithson, waiting to play the 37th, had got hold of himself. I could see that he had resolved to calm down—maybe saying this was the same as starting from scratch and he'd had all the bad luck a man could have. Punkin eyed him warily; he got the drift. Then we both looked at Andrew. He was in a daze, his face drawn and tired.

They both had good drives. Andrew hated to hit his approach. He took half a dozen practice swings. There was no escaping the chore, though, and he finally stepped up to it. He hit a fraction behind the ball and it landed short and bounced on, far from the pin. I thought Smithson hit a perfect shot, but then the crowd at the right of the green began to fall back and scatter. The ball landed in clipped grass behind a trap. Still, he was undisturbed as he walked briskly up to his ball, gave it the wrists with his 9-iron, and smiled as the ball stopped dead three inches from the pin.

Andrew walked up to Smithson's ball and tapped it away.

Punkin was squatting at the edge of the green, lining up Andrew's 28-footer. I forced myself into a position behind him. I wanted to see it for myself. I knew Punkin wasn't counting on a two-putt par for a half. It was doubtful if Andrew could even walk another hole, and Smithson was champing to get on with it. This putt had to go down. I was glad it wasn't me had to figure it or play it.

Andrew knelt beside Punkin, saying, "How does it look?"

Punkin gave Andrew a few seconds to study it, then glanced at him. He was more interested in Andrew's emotional state. "Let's go over to the other side for a look," he suggested.

They walked across and knelt at the far edge, the colored man thoughtful, a hand on his chin, the white boy with his putter laying out straight in front of him. They said something I couldn't hear. Then they returned. Again they sighted from behind the ball.

"I think," Andrew said, "It breaks to the right. About six inches."

"Putt it straight," Punkin muttered.

"Straight?"

"True, she break to the right going over that little mound," Punkin said. "But the green tilts the other way there in front of the hole, and she'll come back if you putt it straight."

Just then a big man—yes, Mr. J. J.—knelt on the line of the putt on the far side of the green. Punkin and Andrew were shoulder to shoulder and Punkin felt him tremble. Punkin glanced at him, then looked where Andrew was staring. He got to his feet.

"Will the white gentleman over there please move out of the putting line?" he asked. Moffitt angrily stood up. "Off the line, please," Punkin repeated. Moffitt stepped sideways. "Still more over, a lot more over." Aware of the spectators' frowns, choking with fury, Moffitt slipped out of sight into the crowd.

Punkin knelt again, "Now, Mr. Andrew, I say, putt it straight."

Andrew studied the line. "I can't see it that way."

"I tell you do what I say," Punkin insisted grimly.

"And I tell you," Andrew whispered back, "I'm tired of having people tell me what to do. I'm going to do something one time the way I want to do it and I don't give a damn what happens."

"Yes sir." Punkin limped across the green, pulled down the fluttering flag, and stood there stiffly holding the pin in the hole.

I thought for a moment Andrew was going to Punkin and apologize, but Punkin wouldn't look at him. Punkin's eyes were on the ball.

Andrew couldn't get up the courage to try it. He stood off to one side, got in three or four ragged practice strokes, came up to his ball, then retired and practiced again. As he returned to take his stance, Punkin's voice came like velvet through the dead silence. "You just stroke it the way you see it, Mr. Andrew. She gonna fall in."

Andrew nodded, pushing his hair back, and got over the ball. He stroked, putting to the left, the way he saw it, and Punkin pulled the pin.

The ball fell off to the right going over the mound, and I had a sudden thought, if Punkin was correct about it breaking back the other way now, the ball will veer to the left of the hole, and I'm a rich man. Otherwise, I'm a busted bum. Whether an ordinary stroke would have let it break back, I still don't know.

Andrew stroked it so hard it never had a chance to. The ball hit the back of the cup, bounced up six inches, and plopped in.

I was stunned blind for a moment. I felt like I was standing under a roaring waterfall—the gallery letting loose. Then I saw Punkin sitting on the ground, his head down on his drawn-up knees, and holding the pin limply in such a way that it reminded me of an exhausted knight with his

spear, collapsed after a bloody battle for the king. His shoulders were heaving but he wasn't laughing.

When they presented Andrew with the outsized loving cup, the lad stood behind the table on the clubhouse lawn and held it in both hands to begin the usual acceptance speech.

"I am most happy and honored to be presented with this cup," he said in that well-bred voice which, I imagined, many thousands of students would eventually hear from the professor behind his desk. "I know that possession isn't permanent, but only gives custody for a year. During that year, however, I should like to have your permission and the privilege to give it into the custody of the man who really won it."

I glanced at Jefferson J. Moffitt. He was reaching up for his necktie to make sure it was straight before stepping forward.

"Is Punkin here?" Andrew asked, raising his voice slightly. "Punkin Carter? Where are you?" He saw Punkin standing open-mouthed at the fringe of the crowd. "Come up here, will you, Punkin?"

Andrew came around the table and met him halfway. "Punkin," he smiled, "you and I know you're the real All-South champion today."

Punkin gulped and even forgot to say yes sir, thank you, sir. He just stood there staring at what he was holding in his hands.

Of course, the crowd was overjoyed. I looked over at J. J. His mouth was open twice as wide as Punkin's had been. Then, as the applause around him rose higher and higher, it sank in on him what a magnificent thing his son had done. His hands came up, his empty hands, and he began beating them slowly together, then faster and faster.

The last I saw of Jefferson J. and Andrew they were walking away through the dispersing crowd. The father had an arm around his son's shoulders. The boy was as good as in the university at Athens right then.

"What am I going to do with this thing?" Punkin asked me, still unable to take his eyes off it.

"Well, if it was mine I'd fill it full of beer and wash it down at one sitting. But since you don't drink, why don't you take it home and put it up on your mantel. You got a mantel, haven't you?"

"Yes sir, I sure have. Built it that way on purpose. Yes sir! Going to put it right up there where I always seen it."

I needed a drink. But instead, I got my bag and went out on the practice tee. I hit iron shots for an hour. If Punkin and that boy could win one, maybe one day Punkin and I could win one, too.

The Man Above the Law



■ There is one individual in this country who, just because he felt like it, could kill you or any other American in cold blood. And there would be nothing that you could do about it. He can neither be sued in our civil courts nor prosecuted in our criminal courts. Not only can he literally "get away with murder"; he can even be guilty of treason and our whole judicial and law-enforcement system is powerless to intervene.

This man is, of course, the President of the United States. The President's legal immunity has been tested many times in the history of our country; each time he has won and emerged even stronger, with another legal precedent attesting the fact that he is uniquely above the law of the land. Perhaps the most recent example of presidential immunity was H. S. Truman's refusal to answer a Congressional subpoena in the Harry Dexter White spy case.

For example, Thomas Jefferson refused to answer a subpoena by the Supreme Court of the United States to produce papers which the Court deemed vital in the trial of Aaron Burr for treason. Jefferson answered critics who accused him of conspiracy by saying that he "had been called upon to look after the rights of all the people in the country" and that his time "could not be taken up by being summoned into court in connection with just one individual. The correction of a lesser evil would produce a greater one." The court was forced to find Aaron Burr "not guilty."

Chief Justice Marshall, the most influential interpreter of our Constitution, said that the President's actions were strictly up to his "own discretion" and that he is accountable . . . only to his own conscience.

The State of Mississippi sought to enjoin President Johnson from doing certain things, but the Supreme Court settled the question of the President's power by ruling that the President could not be enjoined from exceeding his Constitutional powers nor ordered to perform them.

The joker in the whole deal is that while the Supreme Court is the final arbiter in all legal matters in this country, the only way that it can enforce its decrees is to direct the President to enforce its decisions. But he can always refuse, as some Presidents have done in the past.

Fortunately none of our Presidents has shown homicidal tendencies to any marked degree, although other aspects of their character have been questioned. It would be interesting, though, to see a president arrested and convicted of some minor crime, since no one could deny that he has the power of final pardon.

He could just order himself to be turned loose!

-Harold Helper



The Partnership

He was a huge, slab-sided brute,
that horse, but
he was so honest it hurt.
Trouble was, he expected everyone else
to be that honest, too.

■ By JACK SCHAEFER

Not that horse, mister. Not that big, slab-sided brute. Take any or all of the rest, I'm selling the whole string. But not that one. By rights I should. He's no damn good to me. The best horse either one of us'll likely ever see and he's no damn good to me. Or me to him. But I'll not sell him. . . .

Try something, mister. Speak to him. The name's Mark. There. See how his ears came up? See how he swung to check you and what you were doing? The way any horse would. Any horse that likes living and knows his name. But did you notice how he wouldn't look at me? Used to perk those ears and swing that head whenever he heard my voice. Not any more. Knows I'm talking about him right now and won't look at me. Almost ten months it is and he still won't look at me. . . .

That horse and I were five-six years younger when this all began. I was working at one of the early dude ranches and filling in at the rodeos roundabout. A little riding, a little roping. Not too good, just enough to place once in a while. I was in town one day for the mail and the postmaster poked his head out to chuckle some and say there was something for me at the station a mite too big for the box.

I went down and the agent wasn't there. I scouted around and he was out by the stock corral and a bunch of other men too all leaning on the fence and looking over. I pushed up by the agent and there was that horse inside. He was alone in there and he was the damnedest horse I'd ever seen. Like the rest around I'd been raised on cow ponies and this thing looked big as the side of a barn to me and awkward as all hell. He'd just been let down the chute from a box-car on the siding.

There were bits of straw clinging to him and he stood still with head up testing the air. For that first moment he looked like a kid's crazy drawing of a horse, oversize and exaggerated with legs too long and a big stretched-out barrel and high-humped withers and long reaching neck. The men were joshing and wondering was it an elephant or a giraffe and I was agreeing and then I saw that horse move.

He took a few steps walking and flowed forward into a trot. That's the only way to put it. He flowed forward the way water rolls down a hill. His muscles didn't bunch and jump under his hide. They slid easy and smooth and those long legs reached for distance without seeming to try. He made a double circuit of the corral without slowing, checking everything as he went by. He wasn't trying to find a way out. He just wanted to move some and see where he was and what was



Illustration by BOB FINK

doing roundabout. He saw us along the fence and we could have been posts for all the particular attention he paid us. He stopped by the far fence and stood looking over it and now that I'd seen him move there wasn't anything awkward about him. He was big and he was rough-built but he wasn't awkward any more even standing still there. Nobody was saying a word. Everyone there knew horses and they'd seen what I saw.

"Damn it to eternal hell," I said. "That's a horse."

The agent turned and saw who it was. "Glad you think so," he said. "It's your horse. This came along too." And he stuck a note in my hand.

It had my name on it all right. It was from a New York State man who ran some sort of factory there. Shoes, I think he told me once. He'd been a regular at the ranch, not for any dude doings but once a summer for a camping trip and I'd been assigned to him several years running. The letter wasn't long. It said the doctors had been carving him some and told him he couldn't ride again so he was closing his stable. He'd sold his other stock but thought this horse Mark ought to be out where there was more room than there was back East. Wanted me to take him and treat him right.

I shoved that note in a pocket and eased through the fence.

"Mark," I called, and across the corral those ears perked stiff and that big head swung my way.

"Mark," I called again, and that horse turned and came about halfway and stood with head high looking me over.

I picked a coil of rope off a post and shook out a loop and he watched me with ears forward and head a bit to one side. I eased close and sudden I snaked up the loop and it was open right for his head and he just wasn't there. He was thirty feet to the left and I'd have sworn he made it in one leap. Maybe a dozen times I tried and I didn't have a chance. The comments coming from the fence line weren't improving my temper any. Then I noticed he wasn't watching me, he was watching the rope, and I had an attack of common sense. He was wearing a halter.

This wasn't any western range horse. This was one of those big eastern crossbreds with a lot of thoroughbred in them. Likely he'd never had a rope thrown at him before. I tossed the rope over by the fence and walked toward him and he stood blowing his nostrils a bit and looking at me. I stopped a few feet away and didn't even try to reach for the halter. He looked at me and he was really seeing

me the way a horse can and I was somebody who knew his name out here where he'd been dumped out of the darkness of a box-car. He stretched that long neck and sniffed at my shirt and I took hold of the halter and that was all there was to it.

That was the beginning of my education. Yes, mister, it was me had to be taught, not that horse. The next lesson came the first time I tried to ride him. I was thinking what a big brute he was and what a lot of power was penned in him and how I'd have to control it all, so I used a Spanish spade bit that would be wicked if used rough. He didn't want to take it, and I had to force it on him. The same with the saddle. I used a double-rig with a high-roll cantle, and he snorted at it and kept sidling away and grunted all the time I was tightening the cinches.

He stood steady enough when I swung aboard, but when we started off nothing felt right. The saddle was too small for him and sat too high arched over the backbone and those sloping withers. He kept wanting to drop his head and rub his mouth on his legs over that bit. At last he sort of sighed and eased out and went along without much fuss. He'd decided I was plain stupid on some things, and he'd endure and play along for a while.

At the time I thought he was accepting me as boss so I started him really stepping, and the instant he understood I wanted him to move—that was what he did. He moved.

He went from a walk into a gallop in a single flowing rush and it was only that high cantle kept me from staying behind.

I'm telling you, mister, that was something, the feel of those big muscles sliding smooth under me and distance dropping away under those hoofs. Then I realized he wasn't even working. I was traveling faster than I ever had on horseback and he was just loafing along without a sign of straining for speed. That horse just liked moving. I never knew another that liked it as much. It could get to him the way liquor can a man and he'd keep reaching for more. That's what he was doing then. I could feel him notching it up the way an engine does when the engineer pushes forward on the throttle and I began to wonder how he'd be on stopping.

I had an idea twelve hundred pounds of power moving like that would be a lot different from eight hundred pounds of bouncy little cow pony. I was right. I pulled in, and he slowed some. But not much. I pulled harder, and he tossed his head at the bit biting, and I yanked in sharp, and he stopped.

Yes, mister, he stopped all right. But he didn't slap down on his haunches and slide to a stop on his rump the way a cow pony does. He took a series of jumps stiff-legged to brake and stopped short and sudden with his legs planted like trees, and I went forward bumping my belly on the horn and over his head and hanging there doubled down over his ears with my legs clamped around his neck.

That Mark horse was as surprised as I was but he took care of me. He kept his head up and stood steady as a rock while I climbed down his neck to the saddle. I was feeling foolish and mad at myself, and I yanked mean on the reins and swung him hard to head for home. That did it. He'd had enough. He shucked me off his back the way someone might toss a beanbag. Don't ask me how. I'd ridden plenty of horses and could make a fair showing even on the tough ones. But that Mark horse wanted me off and he put me off. And then he didn't bolt for the horizon. He stopped about twenty feet away and stood there watching me.

I sat on the ground and looked at him. I'd been stupid, but I was beginning to learn. I remembered the feel of him under me—taking me with him, not trying to get away from me. I remembered how he behaved all along and I studied on all that.

THERE wasn't a trace of meanness in that horse. He didn't mind being handled and ridden. He'd been ready and willing for me to come up and take him in the station corral. But he wasn't going to have a rope slapped at him and be yanked around. He was ready and willing to let me ride him and to show me how a real horse could travel. But he wasn't going to do much of it with a punishing bit and a rig he didn't like. He was a big batch of good horseflesh, and he knew it and was proud, and he had a hell of a lot of self-respect. He just plain wouldn't be pushed around and that was that and I had to understand it.

I claim it proud for myself that I did. I went to him and he waited for me as I knew now he would. I swung easy into the saddle, and he stood steady with his head turned a little so he could watch me. I let the lines stay loose and guided him just by neck-reining and I walked him back to the ranch. I slid down there and took off that western saddle and the bridle with that spade bit. I hunted through the barn till I found a light snaffle bit and cleaned it and put it in the bridle. I held it up for him to see, and he took it with no fuss at all. I routed out the biggest of the three English saddles we had for eastern dudes who wouldn't use any-

thing else and that I'd always thought were damned silly things. I showed it to him and he stood quiet while I slapped it on and buckled the single leather cinch.

"Mark," I said. "I don't know how to sit one of these crazy postage stamps and I'm bunged up some right now. Let's take it easy." Mister, that horse knew what I'd said. He gave me the finest ride I ever had. . . .

See what I mean, the best damn horse either of us'll ever see? No, I guess you can't. Not yet. You'd have to live with him day after day and have the endless little things tally up in your mind. After a while you'd understand as I did what a combination he was of a serious dependable gent and a mischievous little kid. With a neat sense of timing on those things, too. Take him out for serious riding and he'd tend strict to his business, which was covering any kind of ground for you at any kind of speed you wanted. The roughest going made no difference to him. He was built to go at any clip just about anywhere short of straight up a cliff, and you got the feeling he'd try that if you really wanted him to.

But let him loaf around with nothing to do and he'd be curious as a cat on the prowl, poking into every corner he could find and seeing what devilment he could do. Nothing mean, just playful. Maybe a nuisance if you were doing a job where he could get at you and push his big carcass in the way, whiffling at everything or come up quiet behind and blow sudden down your shirt collar.

Let him get hold of a bucket and you'd be buying a new one. There'd not be much left of the old one after he'd had his fun. He'd stick his nose in and flip the thing and do that over and over like he was trying for a distance record then start whamming it around with his hoofs, tickled silly at the racket. And when there'd be no one else around to see how crazy you were acting he'd get you to playing games too. He liked to have you sneak off and hide and whistle low for him and he'd pad around stretching that long neck into the damnedest places looking for you and blow triumphant when he found you. Yes, mister, that horse liked living and being around him would help you do the same.

And work? That horse was a working fool. No. There was nothing foolish about it. The ranch was still in the beef business in those days, and he'd never had any experience with cattle before. He was way behind our knowing little cow ponies when it came to handling them, and he knew it. So he tried to balance that by using those brains of his overtime and working harder than any of the others.

He'd watch them and try to figure what they were doing, and how they did it, and then do it himself. He'd try so hard sometimes I'd ache inside feeling that eagerness quivering under me.

Of course, he never could catch up to them on some things. Too big. Too eager. Needed too much room moving around. He couldn't slide into a tight bunch of cattle and cut out the right one, easing it out without disturbing the rest. And he wasn't much good for roping even though he did let me use a western saddle for that soon as he saw the sense to it. Lunged too hard when I'd looped an animal and was ready to throw it. Maybe he'd have learned the right touch in time, but he didn't get the chance. The foreman saw us damn near break a steer's neck and told us to quit.

Trees Breathe

■ A living tree actually breathes, inhaling oxygen and exhaling carbonic acid. Trees have a real effect on climate, not only through providing shade and wind-breaks, but by cooling the air with water. The average oak tree in its five active months evaporates about 28,000 gallons of water—an average of about 187 gallons a day. Evaporation takes place through little elastic curtains on the lower surface of the leaves, called stomates; in dry weather these are drawn up tightly.

—John T. Dunlavy

But on straight herding he couldn't be beat.

He could head a runaway steer before it even stretched its legs. He could scour the brush for strays like a hound dog on a scent. He could step out and cover territory all day at a pace that'd kill off most horses and come in seeming near as fresh as when he started. I used to think I was tough and could take long hours, but that horse could ride me right out of the saddle and then act like he thought I was soft for calling a halt.

But I still haven't hit the real thing. That horse was just plain honest all through. No, that's not the exact word. Plenty of horses are that. He was something a bit more. Square. That's it. He was just plain square in everything he did and in the way he looked at living. He liked to have things fair and even. He was my horse and he knew it. I claim it proud that for a time anyway he really was my horse and let me know it. That meant I was his man, and I had

my responsibilities, too. I wasn't a boss giving orders. I was his partner. He wasn't something I owned doing what I made him do. He was my partner doing his job because he wanted to and because he knew that was the way it ought to be with a man and a horse.

Long as I treated him right, he'd treat me right. If I'd get mean or stupid with him I'd be having trouble. I'd be taking another lesson. Like the time along about the second or third week when I was feeling safer on that English saddle and forgot he wasn't a hard-broke cow pony. I wanted a sudden burst of speed for one reason or another, and I hit him with my spurs. I was so used to doing that with the other horses that I couldn't figure at first what had happened. I sat on the ground rubbing the side I'd lit on and stared at him watching me about twenty feet away. Then I had it. I unfastened those spurs and threw them away. I've never used the things again on any horse.

Well, mister, there I was mighty proud to have a horse like that, but still some stupid because I hadn't tumbled to what you might call his specialty. He had to show me. It was during fall round-up. We had a bunch of steers in the home corral being culled for market, when something spooked them and they started milling wild and pocketed me and Mark in a corner. They were slamming into the fence rails close on each side. I knew we'd have to do some fancy stepping to break through and get around them.

I must have felt nervous on the reins because that Mark horse took charge himself. He swung away from those steers and sailed over it. He swung in a short circle and stopped, looking back at those steers jamming into the corner where we'd been and I sat the saddle catching the breath he'd jolted out of me. I should have known. He was a jumper. He was what people back East called a hunter. Maybe he'd been a timber horse, a steeplechaser. He'd cleared that four-foot fence with just about no take-off space like a kid skipping at hopscotch.

I'm telling you, mister, I had me a time the next days jumping him over everything in sight. When I was sure of my seat, I made him show me what he really could do and he played along with me for anything within reason, even stretching that reason considerable. The day I had nerve enough and he took me smack over an empty wagon I really began to strut. But there was one thing he wouldn't do. He wouldn't keep jumping the same thing over and over the same time out. Didn't see any sense in that. He'd clear whatever it was maybe

twice, maybe three times, and if I tried to put him at it again he'd stop cold and swing his head to look at me and I'd shrivel down to size and feel ashamed.

So I had something new in these parts then, a jumping horse bred to it and built for it with the big frame to take the jolts and the power to do it right. I had me a horse that could bring me real money at the rodeos. I wouldn't have to try for prize-money. I could put on exhibition stunts.

I got together with some of the old show hands and we worked up an act that pleased the crowds. They'd lead Mark out so the people could see the size of him and he'd plunge around at the end of the shank rolling his eyes and tossing his head. He'd paw at the sky and lash out behind like he was the worst mean-tempered man-killer ever caught. It was all a joke because he was the safest horse any man ever handled and anyone who watched close could see those hoofs never came near connecting with anything except air. But he knew what it was all about, and he made it look good.

The wranglers would get him over and into the outlaw chute with him pretending to fight all the way. They'd move around careful outside and reach through the bars to bridle and saddle him like they were scared of him. I'd climb to the top rails and ease down on the saddle like I was scared green but determined to break my neck trying to ride the brute. We'd burst out of that chute like a cannon going off and streak straight for the high fence on the opposite side of the arena. All the people who hadn't seen it before would come up gasping on their seats, expecting a collision that would shake the whole place. And at the last second that horse Mark would rise up and over that fence in a clean, sweet jump and I'd be standing in the stirrups waving my hat and yelling and the crowd would go wild.

AFTER a time most people knew what to expect and the surprise part of that act was gone so we had to drop it. But we worked up another that excited the crowds no matter how many times they saw it. I never liked it much, but once I blew too hard how that horse would jump anything. Someone suggested this, and I was hot and said sure he'd do it and I was stuck with it. He never liked it much, either, but he did it for me. Maybe he knew I was getting expensive habits and needed the money coming in. Well, anyway, we did it and it took a lot of careful practice with a slow old steer before we tried the real thing.

I'd be loafing around on Mark in the arena while the bull-riding was on.

I'd watch and pick a time when one of the bulls had thrown his rider and was hopping around in the clear or making a dash across the open. I'd nudge Mark with my heels and he'd be off in that forward flowing with full power in it. We'd streak for that bull angling in at the side and the last sliced second before a head-on smash we'd lift and go over in a clean sweep and swing to come up by the grandstand and take the applause.

Thinking of it since then I've been plenty shamed. I've a notion the reason people kept wanting to see it wasn't just to watch a damned good horse do a damned difficult job. They were always hoping something would happen. Always a chance the bull might swerve and throw us off stride and make it a real smash. Always a chance the horns might toss too high and we'd tangle with them and come down in a messy scramble. But I didn't think about that then or how I was asking more from a horse, that's always played square, than a man should except in a tight spot that can't be avoided. I was thinking of the money and the cheers and the pats on the back. And then it happened. . . .

Not what maybe you're thinking, mister. Not that at all. That horse never failed in a jump and never would. We'd done our stunt for the day, done it neat and clean, gone over a big, head-tossing bull with space to spare and were just about ready to take the exit gate without bothering to open it. Another bull was in the arena, a mean tricky one that had just thrown his rider after a tussle and was scattering dust real mad.

The two tenders on their cagey little cow ponies had cut in to let the rider scramble to safety and were trying to hustle the bull into the closing-gate pen. They thought they had him going in and were starting to relax in their saddles when that brute broke away and tore out into the open again looking for someone on foot to take apart. While the tenders were still wheeling to go after him he saw something over by the side fence and headed towards it fast.

I saw too and sudden I was cold all over. Some fool woman had let a little boy get away from her, maybe three-four years old, too young to have sense, and that kid had crawled through the rails and was twenty-some feet out in the arena. I heard people screaming at him and saw him standing there confused and the bull moving and the tenders too far away. I slammed my heels into Mark and we were moving the way only that horse could move. I had to lunge forward along his neck or he'd have been right out from under me.

There wasn't time to head the bull or try to pick up the kid. There

wasn't time for anything fancy at all. There was only one thing could be done. We swept in angling straight to the big moving target of that bull, and I slammed down on the reins with all my strength so Mark couldn't get his head up to jump and in the last split second all I could think of was my leg maybe getting caught between them when they hit. I dove off Mark sidewise into the dust, and he drove on alone and smashed into that bull just back of those big, sweeping horns.

They picked me up half-dazed with an aching head and assorted bruises and put me on some straw bales in the stable till a doctor could look me over. They led Mark into a stall with a big gash along his side from one of the horns and a swelling shoulder so painful he dragged the leg without trying to step on it. They put ropes on the bull where he lay quiet with the fight knocked out of him and prodded him up and led him off. I never did know just what happened to the kid except that he was safe enough. I didn't care because when I pushed up off those bales without waiting for the doctor and went into the stall—that Mark horse wouldn't look at me.

THAT'S it, mister. That's what happened. But I won't have you getting any wrong notions about it. I won't have you telling me the way some people do that horse is through with me because I made him smash into that bull. Nothing like that at all. He doesn't blame me for the pulled tendon in his shoulder that'll bother him long as he lives when the weather's bad. Not that horse. I've thought the whole business over again and again. I can remember every last detail of those hurrying seconds in the arena, things I wasn't even aware of at the time itself.

That horse was flowing forward before I slammed my heels into him. There wasn't any attempt at lifting that big head or any gathering of those big muscles for a jump when I slammed down 'on the reins. He'd seen. He knew. He knew what had to be done. That horse is through with me because at the last second I went yellow and I let him do it alone. He thinks I didn't measure up in the partnership. I pulled out and let him do it alone.

He'll let me ride him even now, but I've quit that because it isn't the same. Even when he's really moving, and the weather's warm and the shoulder feels good, and he's reaching for distance and notching it up in the straight joy of eating the wind, he's doing that alone. I'm just something he carries on his back, but he won't look at me.

HOW TO GET RICH DRIVING A TRUCK

It's easy. All you do is buy low and sell high—and watch out for hijackers.

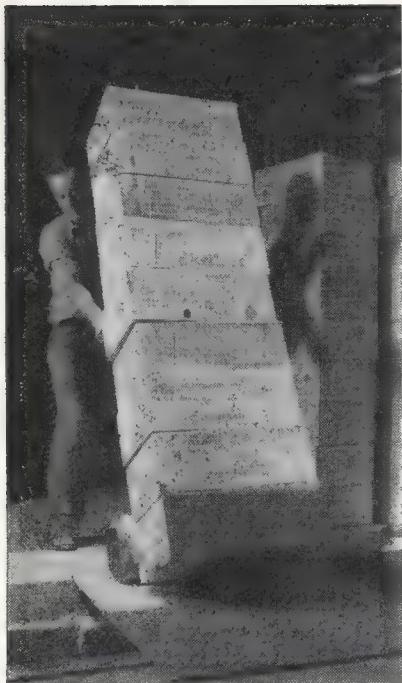
By KEITH MONROE

■ Ten years ago, Bill Carrillo was driving a delivery truck on a skimpy salary. He gambled his savings on a truckload of spinach. It paid off. He parlayed. Today he nets about \$150,000 a year, selling spinach to most of the supermarkets around Los Angeles.

Bill isn't unique. Scattered around the country are dozens of men who have made fortunes by staking their future on a second-hand truck and a load of fruit or vegetables. It still can be done today.

Here's how. You buy some fresh produce from a farmer. You pile it into your truck and start driv-





Will the driver make a killing—or go for a whopping loss? It all depends on the women shoppers, and what they're buying today.

ing. If you get it to a town where the price is up, you make a comfortable profit. Then you find another farmer, load your truck again, and head for home. On the way home, you can hope to turn another profit. Of course, if your truck breaks down or is hijacked, you're out of business.

The reason this venture can be a bonanza is that fruit and vegetable prices fluctuate wildly in the local markets. They're affected by the weather—by how many truckloads and carloads come to town—by the quality of the season's crop—by the moods of fickle housewives.

Thus it's possible that you may buy potatoes at \$1.75 a sack and sell them at \$16.50 a sack, as the late John Hansen, of Los Angeles, did in one famous operation. Or you may buy potatoes at 85¢ a sack, yet fail to sell at any price. If you hit town with a load of lemons on a hot day, when all the ladies are making lemonade, you may get \$16 a box. If the weather along your route is cool, or there are already plenty of lemons in every town you hit, you'll be lucky to unload for \$6.50 a box; the unlucky boys keep driving and driving, without finding any buyers, until the fruit spoils.

A man needs ice-cold gambler's blood to survive in this business. If you're the worrying type, you'll fret yourself to death when you own a truckload of produce. There isn't

any way to know whether the price of your possessions will skyrocket or nosedive. One day everybody is bidding, some days nobody. Today a crop is worth \$10 a ton, tomorrow \$30. If you turn left on the highway, a town may buy your load for triple what you'd get in the towns on the right. Onions have sold at 40¢ a sack and at \$12 a sack. A lucky load of lettuce once paid Bob Leahy \$18,000 when he expected \$3000. The price of grapes recently fell \$2.50 a lug in ten days.

In one three-week period during the winter, the average retail price of tomatoes started at 12¢ a pound; climbed to 45¢ because the crop from California was poor, and the Texas and Florida tomatoes were blighted by frost; fell to 15¢ as hundreds of loads of Mexican tomatoes surged in to fill the vacuum; shot up again to 40¢ when the unpicked remainder of the Mexican crop also froze. How would you like to be buying and selling truckloads of tomatoes during those three weeks?

Nevertheless, a man who buys produce from a farmer usually can count on selling it for more than he paid, if he'll drive it to a town where there are no nearby farms of the same kind. The farther from the farms he goes, the higher the price is likely to be.

Every good-sized community has a place where he can hope to sell his load: a produce marketplace, full of wholesalers' stalls, where they buy from trucks which roar into the market all night long. Even in the smaller towns, there are plenty of grocery men who need fresh fruit and vegetables for their customers, and will sometimes bid fiercely against each other for a choice truckload.

That's why it's still possible to pyramid a truck into a fleet of trucks, and run a few hundred dollars into box-car figures. You may become so big that you buy and sell whole crops like a philatelist dealing in postage stamps; send trainloads of produce rolling across the continent and market them by teletype and long-distance phone.

You even can dream about trying to corner the market; E. Y. Foley, of Fresno, did it with grapes in 1924 and 1937; Hansen did it with potatoes in 1918, and George R. Craig, of Los Angeles, did it with onions in 1942. Ted Sunshine, also of Los Angeles, turned down an offer of \$60,000 in small bills for two carloads of oranges at over-ceiling prices in 1946; he hadn't cornered the market, but oranges were scarce, and the would-be buyer had black-market connections.

Most produce men nowadays agree with Sunshine that it's smarter to stay on the right side of all government regulations. The law has caught up

with most of those who didn't, although they made big killings temporarily. Just recently it collared Levin Tracy, a produce tycoon of Phoenix, Yuma, and the Imperial Valley. He went to prison for evading \$150,000 in Federal income taxes—which gives you a breath-taking idea of what his income must have been.

To get started in this business, you don't even need a truck, if you're rugged enough to work with less. Dominic Jabbia bought and sold bananas in a horse-drawn wagon in Wheeling, West Virginia; by the time he was 17 he had seventeen wagons working for him. Tom Peppers started buying potatoes on a bicycle outside Kansas City. The late Joe Di Giorgio began with a pushcart in New York. Marvin Berry had a roadside fruit stand in Oregon. The first three became millionaires; Berry, who has been in business only nine years, is known today as the Potato King and is conservatively estimated to be worth \$300,000.

However, if you can scrape up enough money to make a down payment on a used truck, and still have enough cash left over for purchase of a load of produce, you'll be wise to do it this way instead of on a bike or a cart. You're more mobile, and you have bigger loads to sell.

You can stock up with Maine potatoes or Iowa corn or California lettuce, depending on where you start from, and hit for the open spaces. If all goes well, you sell your load several hundred miles from where you bought it, take on another cargo, and keep rolling. Maybe you wind up in Mexico. There you buy peppers or tomatoes, sell them in Arizona, and head for home with a truckful of grapefruit. One such round trip may net you enough for the remaining payments due on the truck—or for a down payment on a bigger truck.

This sort of operation makes you what tuckers call a gypsy—a roving merchant who buys a truckload where it is plentiful and hopes to sell where it is scarce. Many farmers welcome the gypsy, because he is their best customer if they live in regions poorly served by branch railroads or cold-shouldered by major trucking companies.

Hijackers welcome the gypsy too.

Whenever he stops at a roadside lunch counter, he takes the risk that someone will drive off with his truck and sell the contents. Most of the big rigs are now equipped with touch-me-and-I'll-scream alarms, and can't be started unless the driver pushes a code combination of buttons under the dashboard, so the hijackers don't tackle them as often as they did a few years ago. Instead they now are turning their attention to gypsy trucks,

which usually are naked of protective devices.

Hijacking is apparently the safe, easy way for criminals to make a living. Their loot is conveniently boxed or sacked, all ready to be stolen. It is on wheels, so it can easily be transported. The hijacker can use the truck owner's gasoline to drive away with his goods. Short of having the swag wrapped as a gift, what more could a thief ask?

Once a highway bandit is behind the wheel of a truck and has driven away from the scene of the crime, he looks like any other truck driver. He can find an honest buyer for his cargo just as easily as the real owner could. Three hustling young men once stole a load of milo maize from a Kansas farmer, sold it next morning to a feed store in Hooker, Oklahoma, then hijacked the feed store truck on its delivery route, drove it back north and resold the load the following day at Rolla, Kansas. They were eventually arrested in Montezuma, Kansas, by the FBI, which is hell on hijackers—but that wasn't much help to the farmer or the feed store in retrieving the value of the stolen truckload.

If you're ever robbed of a truck or its contents, your best hope is to report it instantly to the sheriff, state police, and FBI. Because interstate commerce is involved, the FBI will take a hand. And because this kind of crime is flourishing, all sorts of law-enforcement authorities will move mountains to uproot it. (During the

Korean war all types of crime increased, as they invariably do in wartime, but hijacking increased most of all. It's now up 33%, according to FBI statistics, whereas bank robberies are up only 2%.)

The G-men go into action fast, knowing that the time to nab a hijacker is while he's still on the road with his cargo. They hunt truck thieves with everything from bloodhounds to radar, and once covered half of New Jersey looking for a farm about which they knew only that it had a cinder pile near the front gate. This tiny fact, deduced from microscopic study of an empty truck which a hijacker had ditched, led to discovery of the farm and arrest of eleven hijackers who had been using the farm as a cache.

There's no market for hot trucks, so you'll probably recover your truck after the thieves have emptied it. And the chances are that the FBI eventually will find some way to lick hijackers, as it has other kinds of criminals, so you can look forward to a brighter future in the gypsy business a few years from now. Just at the moment, however, you should know that when you hit the road in a gypsy truck you're embarking on almost as dangerous a venture as the old-time stagecoach drivers did.

Because the gypsy usually must travel by night, and travel alone, he is a tempting pigeon for strong-arm men. When his truck is laboring up a steep grade, a bandit on foot can

easily swing aboard it. When it stops at a railroad crossing, or an isolated stop light, anyone can move in and poke a gun in his face. When he rumbles through an overpass, a whole crew of highwaymen can drop onto his truck from above.

Consider the experiences of Harry Scheid, a 33-year-old trucker who grosses over \$100,000 a year. Here's what happened to Scheid, all in one year:

At 2 A.M. on a lonely road, a jalopy ahead of him stopped suddenly and he rammed it. When he jumped out to have words with the other driver, somebody stepped from the shadows and blackjacked him. He woke up with an empty truck and empty pockets.

Two weeks later he was halted at a red light, when a man with a gun joined him in the cab, relieved him of his wallet, ordered him out of the truck, and drove it away. Scheid didn't wait for the truck to be recovered. Business was too good to delay. He gambled most of his savings on another truck—a ten-ton juggernaut with 22 wheels, 15 forward speeds, and 20 lights. It was believed to be as banditproof as any truck could be.

One night he was nursing it over the treacherous Donner Pass, in Nevada, with eighteen tons of watermelon. This pass is a tough hurdle for any truck, and especially for the big rigs, in which the driver must manipulate two shifting levers expert-



A man needs ice-cold gambler's blood to survive in the independent trucking business, because fruit and vegetable prices fluctuate wildly in local markets. With dairy products, it's virtually an impossible set-up. Quality, weather conditions, and women are truckers' hoodoos.

ly at the same instant. At the top of the grade, Scheid felt something snap in the gear mechanism, and his truck started down the icy mountain road out of control.

He kept steering, and praying. Luckily the road was straight, and there was little traffic. The truck reached the bottom of the downgrade at 90 miles an hour. Half the trailer brushed against a bridge post, and broke off. Perhaps a gang was waiting there to pick up the cargo, but Scheid didn't stop to see. Somehow he held the truck on the road, and its momentum kept it moving for ten miles before it clattered to a stop. He flagged down another trucker, and was able to get police help before anybody cleaned out the remainder of his watermelons.

Fortunately, Scheid had piled up a solid bankroll. He took his loss coolly, as any man must in that game, and kept on bucking the bad-luck streak. In Mobile, Alabama, he bought several truckloads of Puerto Rican pineapple for \$10,000, and hired drivers to help truck them to California. He knew that Los Angeles wholesalers were desperate for pineapple that season, because Hawaiian crops had been infected by fruit flies and were under embargo. So he stood to make a fancy profit.

But he still was jinxed. His trucks broke down en route to Los Angeles, and two-thirds of the cargo was spoiled by the time it got there. Scheid spent nine days trying to find a produce broker who would buy the remainder at a sacrifice price. No sale. Nobody wanted pineapples with rotten spots in them. It looked as if Scheid was out \$10,000 plus his trucking costs.

But he happened to pass a big restaurant which advertised a specialty of tall cold pineapple punch. On impulse, he drove in. The restaurateur was overjoyed to slice up Scheid's pineapple and use the good slices; customers had been demanding their usual punch, and going away mad because it wasn't available. Scheid got \$10,000, and almost broke even.

He drove to northern California looking for business, spotted a lettuce crop which seemed promising, and paid \$100,000 for 200 acres of it. Next morning he awoke to find that an unseasonable rain (the kind Californians call a "low mist" or "liquid sunshine") had ruined the whole crop.

Scheid's reputation was spotless. Therefore he was able to stay in business on credit. Soon his luck turned, and this year his Scheid Distributing Company is among the leaders in the produce trucking field.

Scheid probably was saved by the same kind of simple faith in human honesty which underlies most of the

produce business. Many big deals are made without cash changing hands or contracts being signed. Oral agreements are good enough. Even though fruit and vegetable dealers know a man is broke, they'll back him if they're sure he's square.

Proofs of this can be found among produce men everywhere. G. B. Jackson, who runs a celery-and-tomato business worth over \$200,000, made a comeback after a streak of bad luck in 1940 which left him almost destitute. Tom Peppers, of Redlands, a famous peach plunger, went bankrupt for over a million dollars when a deal in peaches turned out badly, but he recovered and now has a net worth estimated by banks at well over a quarter-million dollars. Pinky Williams, of Oxnard, was flat broke in 1937, yet was worth \$200,000 by 1946. The late Henry P. Garin lost everything, but got his creditors to ask the bankruptcy court to name him as receiver, and worked off debts amounting to almost \$500,000.

A French-Canadian named Irene Gendreau had managed a good start in the business when his warehouse in Rimouski, Quebec, burned down in 1950. He borrowed \$100 each from

eight hundred different friends. Within two months each of his creditors received a photograph of his new warehouse and \$2 payment on their loan. Since then he has paid off the entire amount.

A recent survey showed 3,213,268 truck owners in the United States. The vast majority of these are independent one-man operators. But the number of gypsies has been dwindling lately. The Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice has broken up a monopoly which for 25 years was a gold mine among truckers selling to the New York fruit and vegetable market. Elsewhere there has been other legal action. Too many farmers, and too many buyers, have been swindled by gypsies, which is easy—because the gypsy doesn't have to face a customer again tomorrow or ever. Consequently many Midwestern towns have passed ordinances against them. And, in California, the Teamsters Union has decreed that trucks cannot be driven by their owners. This ruling wiped out hundreds of independents.

Others are wiped out every time a fruit or vegetable price takes a freak bounce. Nobody can predict the



Stopping by the roadside, except in broad daylight and in plenty of traffic, is something no gypsy trucker will do. The hijackers could wipe him out before he knew what had hit him.

moods of American housewives. For some mysterious reason, the ladies with the market-bags change their minds en masse about once every decade. In 1946, oranges abruptly stopped selling—not in one city or one region, but all over the country—within the space of 48 hours. The orange market crashed, and anyone who had gambled on oranges took a terrible beating during what had started as a prosperous season.

Another year, women turned up their noses at small oranges and insisted so stubbornly on large ones that a box of big oranges sold for \$5 more than a box of small ones—although both boxes weighed about eighty pounds regardless of the size of the oranges. Then someone discovered that by putting small oranges in a mesh bag, he could sell them for \$1.50 more than the same number of oranges in a box. Thus, by cashing in on the women's whim, a trucker could net 70¢ more per box for his oranges when he paid to put them in bags.

Male buyers are sometimes just as fickle. Each year there is a brisk demand from all over the country for varieties of grapes which make poor eating but passable wine. No one quite understands why thousands of Americans take the trouble to manufacture their own wine—and no one understands why, in some years, they all stop buying grapes at once. In 1947 wine grapes were selling at \$1500 a load, when suddenly the demand vanished. Two days later tons of grapes were being dumped by the roadside. The "wine grape deal" is proverbially one of the most treacherous in the produce business.

In 1918, and again in 1952, people determinedly bought potatoes in spite of skyrocketing prices. In 1945, another mad quirk distorted the potato market: the normal price spread between first-grade and second-grade potatoes is only 1/4¢ a pound, because the two taste exactly the same; yet the actual price spread was 2 1/4¢ a pound. Customers demanded the very best potatoes and paid a foolish premium for them, even though millions of them must have learned by experience that the second-best is only imperceptibly less good.

The same quirk in reverse held the price of top-grade tomatoes in certain areas to 5¢ a pound, while in those same areas women willingly paid 20¢ a pound for second-grade ones. Why? Nobody knows. Truck drivers, who had bought loads of the best tomatoes, cursed the craziness of womankind as they saw other drivers with inferior tomatoes making much bigger money.

The strangest example of all is the lettuce market of 1930. Thin crops produced a nationwide lettuce short-

age that year. So the price should have gone high. But, for eternally mysterious reasons, nobody felt like buying lettuce at any price. The market plummeted, lettuce truckers and speculators went broke, lettuce fields were abandoned and left to rot. But still no one bought lettuce.

Then, over one week-end, an army of women from Maine to Mexico began asking their grocers for lettuce. Prices climbed to ten-year highs and still the women bought lettuce. Abandoned fields were combed and salvaged. Growers who had lost everything borrowed a few hundred and packed their crops for the truckers at unheard-of profits; vanished bankrolls were refattened in a few weeks—all because American women took a notion to buy lettuce. . . .

In spite of troubles with temperamental housewives, autocratic labor unions, hijackers, and police, the rugged gypsies still are doing fine. To get around labor-union regulations, they simply register truck ownership in the name of a father-in-law or a friend. On paper, they are mere salaried employees, and they carry union cards. As for local ordinances against gypsies, if they know about them they steer clear, and if they don't they're willing to take a chance. Such laws are hard to enforce, especially late at night when the truckers do most of their business. If a gypsy gets pinched, he may be fined up to \$100 but that's a small loss compared to the other risks he takes.

So the smartest, toughest—and luckiest—adventurers still are cleaning up in produce speculations. John Curci, a kid who grew up on the hard-fighting east side of Los Angeles and never finished high school, bought a truck at the age of 16. He is now part owner of Orange Belt Fruit Distribu-

tors, the largest independent citrus handlers in California, and has a finger in several other profitable pies.

Jimmie Trino, of Arvin, a former insurance salesman, became a driver for a grape grower. He and the book-keeper started a partnership on \$5000 of borrowed money and a few hundred of their own. Today the partners' assets are listed at more than \$650,000.

Louie Ghiz moved out from Pittsburgh to work for his uncles in the Los Angeles produce business. Six years later he became owner of the Paramount Citrus Association in Phoenix. It is a \$200,000 business.

Ted Sunshine, an ex-stenographer, grosses eleven million in good years with his company, Pacific Coast Fruit Distributors. John Brucato, of San Francisco, an ex-farmhand, built its Farmers Market with profits pyramided from a truckload of pears.

Fortunately for our economic system, such middlemen stabilize the market for the rest of us—not only for the farmers but for the housewives and the restaurants. Prices in grocery stores would jump and dip crazily from day to day, and whole regions would lack certain foods for weeks at a time, while small farmers hunted desperately for markets, if venturesome operators did not keep supply and demand approximately balanced, by carrying the food to where it is scarcest, and steering it away from where it is most plentiful.

Therefore these rough-and-tumble capitalists don't feel guilty when their risks pay off and they take handsome profits. The profits are justifiable. Produce truck-driving puts a man into one of the last frontiers in American business—one of the last places where a man can take a chance, work hard, and maybe strike it rich in a hurry. •

La Polla Peru

A visitor in Lima, Peru, these days doesn't have to be too observing to see dignified elderly women pause in hotel lobbies to compare their La Polla selections with the elevator boys. Or to see business men discuss the day's favorites with their chauffeurs. Or to notice policemen and taxi drivers swapping tips.

Why all the democracy—the fraternization of all walks of life? It's all in the magic word: La Polla. This is a "pool" based on the weekly horse races, with weekly prizes amounting to \$100,000 from the sales of over 200,000 selection cards.

The entry money is pooled and 75 per cent of it is divided into five prizes for those who get the highest number of points. For example, a perfect selection card would cover the first three horses in every race. For a person to play all possible combinations it would cost him more than \$2,000,000. But the gods of chance may be with you even though you have only the second highest score, for your prize may easily be more than the shares of the first money winners if several persons have tied for first place, which sometimes happens. ◇

A SHORT-SHORT STORY COMPLETE ON THESE TWO PAGES

THE WATER HOLE

Tomorrow could take care
of itself. Tonight
the burro needed water.

By JIM KJELGAARD



Illustration by HOWARD WILLARD

When the red burro went down to water, he became aware of the deadly things that awaited at the water hole.

He stopped beside a huge saguaro whose grotesque, twisted arms writhed silently towards the black desert sky. The burro edged closer to the cactus, so that its long needles brushed his coarse coat. He did not feel them, his hide was far too tough and leathery to be penetrated by any thorns. But other desert dwellers had to respect the cactus, and the burro had long since discovered how to take advantage of that.

The burro sniffed drowsy air currents, verifying once more what he already knew. Two cougars had taken possession of the water hole.

The burro remained perfectly still. He was thirsty and he had to drink here because there was no other water. But to drink now meant to die.

A little to one side, on another dim trail that led out of the cactus, there was motion. A sleek mule deer buck, lithe-muscled and heavy-antlered, was down for his daily drink. Like the burro, the buck had also scented the ambushed cougars. He snorted, pounded the earth with a front hoof, and wheeled to race back into the cactus.

The burro did not move.

The buck had fled because he knew how to do nothing except flee from danger, but the burro was wiser than that. During the decade in which he had quenched his thirst at this same water hole, he had encountered various things meant to keep him from drinking. It had never done any good to run from any of them because running solved nothing and, sooner or later, he had to have water.

He waited until the next water-seekers, a range cow and her calf, came in. The desert-wise cow smelled the ambush but indulged in no melodramatic disapproval. Her calf beside her, she faded into the cactus. The burro timed his moves.

In about an hour would come the javelinas, savage little pigs that could tear the cougars to bits if they did not

mind losing some of their own number in the battle that was sure to result. Whether or not the javelinas would attack depended on how badly they wanted water, and the burro knew that he could not depend on their freeing the water hole.

He moved slowly forward, directly towards the water, but he did not get out of the wispy breeze that carried the cougars' scent to him. He knew that they were alert and aware of his coming, but that's what he wanted. The burro advanced at a very slow walk until his nose told him that one of the cougars, the big male, was moving towards him.

He had hoped to attract both, but if this was the way it was to be, then let it be. The burro had lived too long and was far too wise to indulge in anything that resembled disappointment over the miscarriage of a plan.

The thirsty mule deer buck came hopefully back, and the burro hoped the cougars would catch it. If they did, they would leave their ambush and eat. The water hole would be open at least long enough for the red burro to drink tonight. Tomorrow night could take care of itself.

But the nervous buck again wheeled and raced back into the cactus. The red burro would have to work out his own salvation and his own means of getting a drink. Not daring to permit himself the luxury of worry or fear, he gauged exactly the stalking cougar's course.

The burro moved slowly.

He was familiar with the exact pattern of everything about him, and he could move as surely in the darkness as he could by day. In addition, he knew the cougar's pattern of attack. The male would stalk him until he was close enough, then would come the savage rush and a leap intended to bear the red burro to the ground.

Like a ghost, with no sound and no perceptible motion, the burro slipped through a patch of tree-size saguaro. He was fully aware of the risks he took, but they were carefully-calculated risks. The burro proposed to do nothing foolish.

Unless the pursuing cougar came very near, there was little likelihood of attack as long as he stayed in the saguaro. Hungry though the cougar might be, he knew enough about saguaro so that he would not risk colliding with one. The fact that he was in the desert at all proved that. At the same time, the very fact that the cougar had never been here before proved within itself that he was a

stranger to this section. He could not possibly have the burro's intimate knowledge of everything that lay about.

The burro moved slowly out of the saguaro into a snarl of cholla and dwarf staghorn. The thorns did not penetrate his hoofs or the tough skin on his legs, and now a lot depended upon whether the cougar knew about this place.

The burro stood perfectly still. But his nostrils flared wide to catch every bit of scent cast by the cougar. His long ears were erect and alert for sound. Every nerve and muscle was tense, ready for instant action.

Though he could see nothing, scent and almost inaudible sounds told him of the cougar's exact location. At the very edge of the snarled tangle in which the burro stood, the cougar gathered himself for the killing leap.

The burro knew when he left the ground to come up and out. For a very brief interval he was seen, a shadow with the outlines of a cougar, as he arched through the air. But at precisely the right moment, the burro moved.

He glided to one side, a quick and easy motion that was graceful as any the mule deer buck could have made. Still in the air, the lion strove desperately to bow his body and follow. He missed by four inches, and landed on padded feet in the cholla and staghorn cactus.

At the same time, the burro lashed out with both hind feet. He felt them collide suddenly with the cougar's ribs, and the cat rolled backward to knock heavily against a thorned saguaro. Instantly the burro started to run.

He glided like a ghost out of the tangle of dwarf cactus back into the forest of saguaro. The cougar bounded in pursuit, and again landed on all four paws in the cactus bed. There was a single night-splitting snarl of pain and rage.

The burro continued to run, but he did not run fast for there was no pursuit. With his pads filled with cholla and staghorn, and his sides bristling with saguaro thorns, the cougar would not pursue anything at full speed for a long time to come.

Circling around to his original position, the burro again stood still. The mule deer buck, gasping for water, hovered back in the saguaro and the male cougar limped in to join his mate. The burro pondered.

He had crippled one enemy, but he had accomplished no real good because the cougars still had possession

of the water hole. The burro moved forward to see if he could make the female follow him into the cactus.

Then the javelinas came.

Led by a tough old boar, they trooped down a trail that led out of the cactus. The burro did not move. He did not like the javelinas, but he had never had reason to quarrel with them. They ranged different parts of the desert, shared only the water hole, and usually they came to that at different times.

The old boar halted abruptly when cougar scent drifted to his nostrils. When he halted, the herd stopped behind him. Sows with young looked anxiously at their broods. There was no noise whatever, only a deadly silence.

The red burro waited patiently. He had hoped that the javelinas might be thirsty enough to drive the cougars away, but they weren't. The old boar made a nervous little circle and climbed a rise from which he could hear and smell more easily.

There was a sudden break.

One of the young pigs, that had spent all of a blazing day in the heights where the javelinas ranged, trotted down the trail. A sow grunted angrily, but the young pig knew nothing of cougars and he was very thirsty. He raced on.

The night was split by a high-pitched squeal, and the quiet javelinas sprang into action. The pig's squeal was at the same time a fighting cry and a plea for help. The javelinas responded.

The female cougar met them with wrinkled face and taloned paws. She grasped the big boar by both shoulders, rolled over, and all in the same motion disemboweled him. But the rest were upon her. They snarled over her and left her bloody on the sand.

THE male turned to run, then decided to fight, but the old sow that had automatically stepped into the lead boar's place was both expert and powerful. She laid his shoulder bare, and because he was no longer able to control perfectly his needle-studded paws he missed the return stroke. He tried to roll, but the other javelinas sliced and ripped with razored tusks and knife-pointed teeth.

Tomorrow the water hole would be clean again, and what the javelinas did not eat tonight, the buzzards would get when the sun rose. But tomorrow could always take care of itself.

Tonight the red burro walked down to the water hole and drank. •

SMALL JOB

The girl thought all private eyes looked like Humphrey Bogart, until she hired O'Riordan.

Who showed her the way a real detective looks and works on a case, a small case.

By JOHN LATHAM TOOHEY

Sofly whistling "The Mountains of Mourne" between his teeth, James O'Riordan was tidying up his desk. The morning mail lay in a pile in front of him, and he was slitting the letters open with a rusty nail file.

The piano in the next office, quiet until that moment, suddenly erupted, and a nasal voice wavered loudly.

"Come to me in the mi-hi-sy twilight," begged the voice. "Come to me in the ro-ho-sy dawn . . ."

O'Riordan heaved his 203 pounds out of the chair, waddled his five-feet-seven over to the connecting door, and pounded on it. The music stopped, the door opened, and a ferret-like head poked out.

"I have come to you in the rosy dawn, Jocko," said O'Riordan amiably, "to ask you to please shut up with your noise. How's a man to think?"

"Blow, Moe," said the ferret, equally amiable. A version of the same conversation took place every morning. "I publish songs; I gotta find out what they sound like."

"A point well taken," said O'Riordan.

"You don't have to listen," said the ferret. "You're a detective; go hunt somebody."

"Good day to you, sir," said O'Riordan.

"And good day to you," said the ferret.

The door slammed shut, and the song began again, but softer. O'Riordan walked over to the window and looked down at Broadway, at the eleven o'clock traffic. He lit a cigar as the bell on the door in the outer office tinkled. O'Riordan turned to squint through the smoke at the girl who stood in the doorway.

She was his own height, maybe a little taller, and in her early twenties, O'Riordan figured. No makeup on her dark, pretty face, and a scarf wrapped bandanna-fashion around her black hair. Muscles in her slim calves, and a good, straight way of standing. A dancer, thought O'Riordan.

"Mr. O'Riordan?" asked the girl.
"That's right."

"I saw your sign downstairs. You are a detective?"

O'Riordan laughed.

"Once, yes," he said. "But that's a fancy word for it now. Private investigator is better. I look things up for people."

"Maybe you can help me."

"You never know till you try," said O'Riordan, "which is what the midget said after John L. Sullivan knocked him down. Sit down, now."

He waved the girl to a chair and sat down himself, behind the desk.

"I thought you all looked like Humphrey Bogart," said the girl.

"That is a basic misconception," said O'Riordan, rummaging in his top drawer for a pencil with a point on it, "which has long been the bane of my life. I've got Bogart by ten years, fifty pounds, three kids and a grandson. And he's only got me by some hair and a couple of hundred thousand bucks. Name, please."

"Jackie Borden."

"Jackie?"

"Jacqueline."

"Address."

"348 West 49th Street."

"Age."

"Twenty-three."

O'Riordan was printing in block letters on a small white filing card.

"Got a job?"

"Over at the Corran Theater, in 'Take It Easy.' I'm a dancer."

"What's on your mind, Jackie?"

"There's a sneak thief at the theater," said the girl. She had pulled off her scarf and was twisting it nervously in her lap. "A few of the girls have been missing money lately."

"Only girls?"

"Yes, so it's got to be one of the kids in the show. The money's always disappeared during performances. Only the kids go upstairs near those dressing rooms."

"How many thefts?"

"Four, counting mine. We've got seventeen kids. Thirteen could have done it."

"Seventeen, Jackie," said O'Riordan, smiling. "If I was a smart thief, the first thing I might do would be steal something of my own."

"You don't think . . ."

"I don't think," he said. "Just don't jump to conclusions. Now. You didn't come here about five bucks."

"My pocketbook. It had some letters in it." Jackie twisted the scarf tighter in her lap. "I've had two phone calls, one yesterday, one this morning."

"Man or woman?"

"A man with a greasy voice." She shivered a little. "He didn't say much; it was the way he said it. Yesterday all he did was read off a couple of sentences from one of the letters, and laugh, and then he hung up. He made it sound horrible and dirty."

"What are these letters?" said O'Riordan.

"They're from a man, a married man," said Jackie nervously. "It was over six months ago. I was always going to get rid of them, and then, I don't know, I just couldn't do it."

"So you carry them around for this no-good to pick up," said O'Riordan. "This kid in your show, whoever she is, has nice friends. Anything else in the pocketbook?"

"Eighteen dollars," said Jackie. "And a letter from my boy friend. We're engaged. He's out in Chicago now."

"Holy Saint Patrick," said O'Riordan tonelessly. "The letters in their envelopes?"

"Yes."

"So the return addresses give Greasy-voice the names, and the postmarks give him the dates. And I bet he can add up two and two. You've wrapped it up very neat for him. What'd he say this morning?"

"Just another laugh, and 'I hope Al's broad-minded.'"

"Is he?"

"No, he isn't."

O'Riordan picked his dead cigar out of the ashtray and relit it.

"You've got a little time yet before the real squeeze," he said. "This

guy's going to give you a slow needle until he thinks you're scared blue."

"You don't think it's too late, then?"

"Oh, it's never too late," said O'Riordan. "Sometimes it just seems like it is. Who are the other girls who had money taken?"

Jackie gave him the names, and O'Riordan printed them down.

"Who's your stage manager?"

"Jerry Boyd."

"Matinee today?"

Jackie nodded.

"I want to see Boyd first. I'll meet you backstage with him. Say, two o'clock."

"All right," said Jackie. She stood up and fixed the scarf on her head again. "Er—what do I owe you?"

"Thirty the first day," said O'Riordan, "and then we'll work something out." Jackie's eyebrows went up. O'Riordan smiled.

"Nobody was downstairs with a club forcin' you up to the office," he said.

He took the three tens and put them in his pocket and patted her on the back.

"Two o'clock," he said. "Don't worry."

Jackie looked at him, at the rumpled suit and the massive stomach and the gray hair and the creased Irish face with the nose pushed in.

"I won't," she said. "I like you."

"We're even," said O'Riordan.

He watched her go out, and then he went over to the connecting door and pounded on it. The piano stopped, and the ferret appeared.

"So," he said. "More complaints?"

"You may now play as loud as you like, Jocko," said O'Riordan. "I am going down to get a haircut."

"A better suggestion," said the ferret. "A throatcut."

"Bob Hope," said O'Riordan.

O'Riordan bowed to him, and the ferret bowed back, and then O'Riordan locked up the office and went downstairs to the barber shop....

At five minutes of two O'Riordan swayed down Forty-fourth Street through the matinee crowds, nudging his way like a ponderous blimp past



Illustration by ANTHONY

the old ladies and the middle-aged ladies and the slicked-down, excited children. He nodded hello to the doorman at the Shubert, and paused for a moment on the curb in front of the Curran as a mounted policeman walked his horse up to him.

"Hello, Jimmy," said the cop. "Working?"

"A small one," said O'Riordan.

The cop nodded, and O'Riordan turned in to the Curran's stage door. Jackie and Jerry Boyd, a chunky, dark-haired young man in shirtsleeves, were waiting for him. Jackie was in a wrapper, her face made up, her hair in curlers. They went up a narrow, curving iron staircase to Boyd's office, an empty dressing room on the second floor.

"Things like this are lousy for a company," said Boyd. "Everybody's starting to look cross-eyed at everybody else."

"Jackie tells me you have seventeen dancers," said O'Riordan.

"That's right," said Boyd.

"And a swing girl?"

"No. We swing each number separately."

"Show me."

THEY went over to a large chart inked on cardboard. It was hanging on the wall.

"Fifteen girls do the first number," said Boyd. "The other two swing it, so they're available in case any of the fifteen call in sick. Same with the other numbers, except different girls do the swinging. It's all down on the chart here."

"Uh-huh," said O'Riordan. He took out the list he'd made in the office and began comparing it with the chart, rocking gently on his heels and humming. After a couple of minutes he said:

"Who's Estelle Myers?"

"New girl," said Boyd. "She came into the show three weeks ago. Why?"

"She's the only girl in the company who's always offstage while these other tour are on."

"I'll be damned," said Boyd, staring at the chart.

"Estelle?" said Jackie.

"This doesn't prove anything yet," said O'Riordan. "But I better talk to her."

"She's dressed by now," said Boyd. "I'll get her right away. Get your costume on, Jackie. They called fifteen."

Alone in the room, O'Riordan looked briefly at the chart again, and then went out into the hall to wait. A six-foot blonde, wearing three strategic bunches of feathers and nothing else, came drifting lazily down the hall, buffing her nails and yawning. O'Riordan tried moderately hard not to stare at her, and lost. The blonde

gave him a cold look, and spoke without interrupting either her slow glide or her nail work.

"So whatcha lookin' at?"

"Take it easy, honey," said O'Riordan. "I'm an old man with an ulcer."

"So's my boy friend," said the blonde, disappearing, with a languid wiggle, around a corner. O'Riordan retreated to the dressing room. . . .

Estelle Myers was slender and red-headed, and her blue eyes were pale and worried in the context of her vividly made-up face. She stood in the doorway in sequined tights and a red silk bra, looking warily at O'Riordan.

"You a cop?" she said.

"Sort of," said O'Riordan. "An investigator."

"You got nothing on me."

The words came out in a tumbling rush. It should always be this easy, thought O'Riordan.

"I've got nothing on nobody," he said. "Close the door and sit down."

Estelle shut the door and leaned against it.

"I'm all right here," she said, still watching him.

"It's this way," said O'Riordan, a faint smile on his battered, friendly face. "I looked at that chart on the wall there. I made a little discovery."

Estelle's eyes darted to the chart.

"Now, maybe I'm wrong," he said. "If a detective from the station house looked at the chart, though, I think he'd see the same thing. Maybe he'd be wrong too. All I know is I'm a hell of a lot easier to talk to than any detective is gonna be. So I thought maybe you'd like to talk to me."

"Five minutes!" called a voice in the hall outside.

"Talk about what?" whispered Estelle.

"Well," said O'Riordan, "anything you want. Is Hitler really dead. Could the '27 Yankees take the '53 Yankees. The stuff that's been stolen around here lately."

Estelle's painted face worked and stiffened and then suddenly crumpled. O'Riordan handed her a thick white handkerchief.

"Don't make a mess," he said. "And say it quick."

"I got four hundred into a bookie," said Estelle brokenly, into the handkerchief. "He got nasty. I didn't know what to do."

"Which one?"

"Louie La Palma."

"I know him," said O'Riordan. "He stinks."

"On ice," said Estelle bitterly. "I never took a penny before. I didn't want to steal the money, but I had to keep him quiet. When I took Jackie's purse I didn't even open it, I just sneaked it out of the theater under my coat and gave it to him."

"Uh-huh," said O'Riordan. "And?"

"And he opened it and took out the money, and then he found a couple of letters, and he read them, and laughed. That's not right, other people's letters."

"That's not right, other people's money either," said O'Riordan.

"Overture!" called the voice in the hall.

"What're you gonna do?" said Estelle.

"I don't know yet," said O'Riordan. "Go on to work."

"You gonna tell the cops?"

"We'll see," said O'Riordan. "For now just keep your mouth shut and your fingers where they belong."

"Don't worry," said Estelle. She handed him back his handkerchief. "I get out of this, I never get in again."

She opened the door, and the blare of the overture on the loudspeaker washed over them. The stairs were crowded now, the girls all in the same sequins-and-bra outfit that Estelle was wearing, the boys in open sport shirts and black slacks. Their chatter died as O'Riordan squeezed his way apologetically past them, and picked up again in undertones as soon as he went on. Funny how everybody can smell cop, thought O'Riordan.

He went out into the bright sunshine, stood at the curb, and beckoned to the mounted policeman. The horse picked its way through the honking snarl of cars, and the policeman bent down a little, his eyebrows raised in a question.

"Where's Louie La Palma hanging these days?" asked O'Riordan.

"The Four Aces," said the cop.

"Take it easy, Jimmy. A bad boy."

"Uh-huh," said Jimmy O'Riordan. "Thanks."

O'Riordan walked down to the drugstore on the corner. He sat at the fountain, and stared sadly at the hamburgers crackling on the greased grill, and thought of his ulcer, and had scrambled eggs and a chocolate malted, chewing and drinking slowly. Then he went out to Eighth Avenue and started walking north, past the delicatessens and the cheap bars and the two-dollar "hotels" with the bums asleep in the doorways. The Four Aces was four or five blocks up, a bar like any of a dozen others he'd passed. The bar itself was at the right as he went in, with a couple of mid-afternoon beer drinkers watching the ball game, and a sawed-off, bald bartender polishing a highball glass. He stopped polishing it when his eyes met O'Riordan's.

"La Palma here?" asked O'Riordan pleasantly.

"The back," said the bartender.

He started to rub the glass again.

more slowly, still looking at O'Riordan. Jimmy O'Riordan nodded, and squinted into the gloom at the back of the room. Three men were sitting at one of the small red-and-white checkered tables. The man in the center was grossly fat. Three great rolls of pale flesh welled between his tight collar and his shiny chin. His eyes were piglike, sleepy and knowing, and set deep and close together in his fat face. He was wearing a mussed linen suit. The other two men were dressed like twins, in shiny gabardine slacks and half-sleeved white shirts with their thick forearms jutting out. The three of them looked up as O'Riordan approached their table. He spoke to the fat man.

"Hello, Louie," he said.

The fat man's eyes were expressionless.

"You're a long way from home," said La Palma.

"A long way and lonesome," said O'Riordan, "so I thought I'd pass the time of day."

He glanced at the twins.

"Goodby, boys."

The two men looked at La Palma, who nodded. They got up without looking at O'Riordan and moved over to the bar. O'Riordan sat down at the table. La Palma picked up the cup of black coffee in front of him and sipped it.

"How's business, Louie?" said O'Riordan.

La Palma put down the cup. "I get along," he said. "A little here, a little there."

"I thought maybe you might be branching out," said O'Riordan. "I thought maybe you got a little tired trimming punks and lunches, and figured blackmail might be an easier buck."

"Keep talking," said La Palma.

The two men at the bar were sitting quietly on their stools, watching O'Riordan. The bartender was carefully inspecting the baseball game.

"You got some letters by accident," said O'Riordan. "My client wants them back."

LA PALMA stared at him, and then threw back his head and laughed, a laugh that started low in his belly and wound up as a high-pitched squeal. O'Riordan smiled gently. The twins at the bar sat with folded arms, without moving.

"Laugh while you're healthy, Louie," said O'Riordan. "The cops don't like blackmailers."

La Palma stopped laughing, and looked at O'Riordan almost benevolently, as if he were a stupid child. He put a fat, hairy hand carelessly on O'Riordan's shoulder.

"Listen, shamus," he said. "I'll tell you a secret. I don't know how you

got this far, but it's as far as you go. You can't blow the whistle; you got no proof, and you know it. And when my deal's over, and I got my couple of bucks, you *still* won't have any proof, and you know that too."

"It's dirty money," said O'Riordan. He reached up and took La Palma's hand off his shoulder.

"And it spends just like the other kind," said La Palma. "Get lost."

"When I feel like it," said O'Riordan.

"Oh, no," said La Palma. "You got it all wrong. When I feel like it."

He nodded to the twins, and they came off their stools like cats. One on each side, without saying anything, they locked O'Riordan under the armpits and swung him up out of the chair and down past the bar, his feet running involuntarily to keep up with them. O'Riordan swore and twisted as they trotted him to the door. The bartender kept his eyes glued to the screen as if his brother was playing shortstop. The twins heaved, and O'Riordan spun across the sidewalk and grabbed at a lamppost to keep from falling. He swung around, breathing heavily. A few people stopped to watch. La Palma stood in the doorway, flanked by the twins.

"Try coming back in," he said. "Come on. Please."

O'Riordan looked at him, and at the twins, who were smiling now.

"I'll see you later, Louie," said O'Riordan.

"Goodby, hero," said La Palma.

He laughed and went back inside. O'Riordan walked heavily down the street, brushing off his sleeves. Twenty years ago, maybe even ten, I would have gone back in, he thought, and he unconsciously ran a finger over his broken nose. You're getting on, Jimmy. That you are.

O'Riordan went back to the fountain and ordered another malted. He sat over it for fifteen minutes, staring off into space, and then he went back to the theater.

This ought to work, he thought. If it doesn't we'll handle Fat Boy some other way. But this way is very possible.

Boyd was in the wings, softly giving orders into the intercom, as O'Riordan made his way through the backstage dimness, easing past whispering chorus girls and shirtsleeved stagehands. The stage itself was full of blare and light and movement.

"How much longer to the act?" asked O'Riordan.

"This is the finale," Boyd whispered back. "Four minutes."

"I want to see Jackie and Estelle in the office."

"Soon as we're down," said Boyd.

When the girls came into the dressing room, they were panting a little

from the dance they'd just finished. They were in silver gowns, cut low in front and slit to the hip.

"Jackie knows it all," said Estelle, with a glance at the other girl.

"What's done's done," said Jackie. Her voice was flat and tired, but without rancor. "Did you see this La Palma?"

"I did," said O'Riordan. "Shut the door."

Jackie pushed the door shut and O'Riordan looked at them.

"Both of you listen now," he said. "Estelle, you're going to call up La Palma. He's at an Eighth Avenue bar. The Four Aces."

"I know," said Estelle. "The crumb books out of there."

"Tell him your girl friend knows it's you that took her purse; she hired an investigator and he found out. Tell him she's sick of the stupid old Irishman she hired. She knows he got thrown out of the Four Aces this afternoon, and all she wants is her letters back, and no more phutzing around with investigators."

"Thrown out?" said Jackie, wide-eyed.

"On my Dublin duff," said O'Riordan. He turned back to Estelle. "Tell him Jackie wants to meet him at Luigi's on Forty-fifth Street, at seven o'clock. She'll have money with her, and she wants to talk business. Got all that?"

"Got it," said Estelle.

"Go call up."

JACKIE stared at him with bewilderment as Estelle hurried out.

"What's all this?" she said. "I'm not sick of you, but if you think I'm gonna pay that creep any money . . ."

"Second act!" called a voice.

"Hey, I've got a change," said Jackie.

"No time for questions," said O'Riordan. "Can you get your hands on five hundred bucks in a hurry? Draw it from the box-office, maybe? You'll only need it for an hour."

"I don't know," said Jackie doubtfully. "I guess I could. The company manager's a good guy."

"Get it and stick it in your pocket," said O'Riordan, "and be at Luigi's by ten of seven. Luigi'll show you what table to go to. When La Palma comes, show him the dough. He'll ask for more. Bargain with him. Keep him talking."

"And then?"

"And then you'll see one hell of a surprised bookee," said O'Riordan.

"Where'll you be all this time?" asked Jackie.

"Don't worry about that," said O'Riordan. "You'll see me. And so will our fat friend."

O'Riordan walked over to Sixth Avenue and made a purchase in the

toy department at Stern's. He stopped at a hardware store and bought something else, and then tucked the two packages under his arm and strolled across town to Luigi's. Luigi, behind the bar, beamed when he saw him come in.

"Jimmy!" he said. "No more wagon? No more malteds? A little bourbon, maybe. Beer on the side. Like the old days."

O'Riordan grinned and shook his head.

"Still on the milk run," he said. "But I got a little job you can help me with."

"Anything you say," said Luigi.

"Well," said O'Riordan, "first I want to damage one of your tables and then . . ."

O'Riordan finished what he had to do in half an hour.

"You got it all straight now," he said. "The girl'll come in first, and she's got to sit at that table. Keep it free."

"So help me, Jimmy," said Luigi. "President *Eisenhower* comes in, he don't sit there."

"That's fine," said O'Riordan. "I'll be back."

It was only a quarter to six, too early for dinner, so O'Riordan dropped into the newsreel and spent an hour slouched comfortably on the small of his back, working his way stick by stick through a package of gum. At a minute or two after seven, he entered Luigi's again. Luigi nodded to him from the bar and made the thumb and middle finger circle. O'Riordan looked into the back. La Palma and Jackie were sitting at the farthest table. The fat man was leaning forward and talking, gesturing daintily with his left hand. Jackie was sitting stiff in her chair, nervously fiddling with a half-empty drink. She started as O'Riordan came up to the table.

"I hope this isn't private," said O'Riordan.

La Palma scowled at him, and glared at the girl.

"You said you were through with this joker," he said.

Jackie kept her lips pressed together.

"Three coffees," O'Riordan said to a passing waiter. He turned to La Palma. "She's just about through with me," he said mildly. "But I keep buttin' in."

"Butt right out, buster," said La Palma. "Right now."

"Not right now," said O'Riordan. "You got it all wrong."

The waiter returned with the coffee.

O'Riordan stirred his, and then tapped the table's wooden sugar bowl with his spoon.

"Sugar in your coffee, Louie? You

don't like sugar, though. Especially this kind."

He put the spoon down and dug his hand deep into the sugarbowl, and held up a small microphone. La Palma stared at it. So did Jackie. The wire attached at the bottom ran on down into the bowl.

"The wonders of science, Louie," said O'Riordan. "You know what this is, and you know what you've been saying. All on a record. Now can I blow the whistle?"

La Palma swore and grabbed at the microphone. The wire snapped and the sugar bowl smashed to the floor. The bowl had been covering a small hole drilled in the table.

"Through the table to the floor, Louie," said O'Riordan. "And across the floor to the back room. Take a look."

La Palma's eyes flicked down to the almost invisible wire. He licked his lips. And he measured the door to the back room.

"Too late now, Louie," said O'Riordan. "Too late to call your gorillas. I got a fast man back there. The record's in an envelope and the envelope's in a mailbox. It's going to a post office box, and it'll stay there till I want to use it. Now let's have the letters."

La Palma tugged at the collar on his bulging neck, his eyes heavy with anger.

"Give," said O'Riordan, putting out his hand.

The fat man hesitated, and then reached into his breast pocket and took out three letters. O'Riordan handed them over to Jackie without taking his eyes off La Palma.

"The ones?" he asked.

Jackie glanced down at them briefly. Her hands were trembling.

"Right," she said.

O'Riordan's face spread into a wide grin.

"Tell you a secret, Louie," he said.

La Palma sneered at him.

"Never trust an Irishman," said O'Riordan softly, "when he's smiling."

He got half out of his chair and hunched his shoulders, and hit Louie La Palma flush on the jaw with his right fist. The fist had moved maybe ten inches. The fat man went off his chair, slammed against the wall, slumped and just lay there. O'Riordan sucked his knuckles and looked gravely at Jackie. She was trying to decide whether to laugh or cry.

"I'm really gettin' too old for this kind of thing," said O'Riordan. "But it's nice, now and then. Now let's get out of here."

They got up and walked through the suddenly quiet room to the front door. A few of the dining couples gave O'Riordan apprehensive glances, but the normal, muted babble of any

restaurant swelled up gently again behind him when it became obvious that Luigi was waiting at the door for him as a friend, with a great grin on his face.

"Trouble you make for me, Jimmy," said Luigi. "You put holes in my tables, you break my sugar bowls, you leave your trash here." He jerked his thumb back at La Palma. "What'll I do with him?"

"He'll go home when he wakes up," said O'Riordan. "I don't think he likes this place."

"All went well?"

"All went fine," said O'Riordan. "Thanks for everything."

"Any time," said Luigi. "Just like the old days."

O'Riordan stood on the sidewalk outside with Jackie. She was still holding the letters in her hand.

"Just to make sure you don't think of saving those again," said O'Riordan.

He took the letters, handed her back the one from Chicago, and flicked his lighter at the other two. They watched as the letters crisped and bent in his hand into gray-black ashes. O'Riordan ground the last smouldering fragment under his heel.

"There," he said.

JACKIE stared down at the ashes with a sad little smile, and then looked at him.

"Fancy stuff in there," she said. "Microphones and all. I'm glad you're on my side."

"Oh, not a real microphone," said O'Riordan. He used the lighter again to get a cigar going. "Microphones cost money. Three, four hundred bucks for a setup like that. A kid's walky-talky mouthpiece and a few yards of wire. But Fatso couldn't know that."

"There wasn't any record?"

"You figure a way to make a record with that stuff," said O'Riordan. "I'll get you five hundred a week with Victor."

"I can't start trying to thank you," said Jackie.

O'Riordan noticed with horror that her eyes were starting to fill up.

"Don't," he said. "If you know anybody needs any help, you know the address. I can always use the business. Take care, now."

He patted her on the arm. She put up her hand and held his hand on her arm, tight, and turned and went down the street. O'Riordan watched her go.

Lum Yee's tonight, he thought, and the hell with the ulcer. Egg roll and spareribs and a fat brandy afterwards. It's been a long day. And you're only 54 once.

He was whistling as he walked toward the Chinaman's.

CAN YOU ANSWER THE 25 MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED SPORTS QUESTIONS?

By JACK FISKE

QUESTIONS

1. Was Joe Louis the world's heavyweight champion when he was knocked out by Max Schmeling?
2. Did Branch Rickey ever play major league baseball?
3. What are the first three U.S. stadiums in seating capacity?
4. How many rounds were the two Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney fights?
5. In the following situation is the batted ball fair or foul? The batter hits a ball which lands in foul territory about 20 feet from the plate on the first base side and then spins back onto the playing field in fair territory.
6. Did Notre Dame ever play in the Rose Bowl?
7. Who is taller, Pee Wee Reese of the Dodgers or Phil Rizzuto of the Yankees?
8. How many fighters have knocked Joe Louis down?
9. Who was the first to run the 100-yard dash in :09.4?
10. How far did the Brick Muller pass to Brodie Stephens travel in the air during the California-Oregon State Rose Bowl game of 1921?
11. Who has won more U.S. Open titles, Bobby Jones or Ben Hogan?
12. What is the rule concerning the official round of knockout when a fighter can't continue between rounds?
13. What were the weights of Jack Dempsey and Jess Willard in their title fight at Toledo, Ohio, on July 4, 1919?
14. Who is the all-time top money winner, Citation or Stykie?
15. Did the St. Louis Browns ever win an American League pennant?
16. How old is "Jersey Joe" Walcott?
17. How many times was Sugar Ray Robinson defeated and was he ever held to a draw?
18. Was it Babe Ruth who struck out with the bases loaded in the seventh game of the 1926 World Series between the Yankees and Cardinals?
19. Who won the most games in the Army-Notre Dame football series?
20. How many innings does a starting pitcher have to go in order to be awarded the victory?
21. Which sport in the U.S. has the largest spectator attendance?
22. Is it legal for a jockey to bet on the horse he is riding?
23. What were the results of the three Tony Zale-Rocky Graziano fights?
24. What are the lifetime major league batting averages of Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams and Stan Musial?
25. Has any major league pitcher ever lost after tossing a no-hitter?

Duties of a metropolitan newspaper's sports department are not complete with reporting and printing the day's events. It is also called upon to dig deep into old files, record books and memory to refresh hazy recollections of telephone callers and letter writers who depend upon it to settle arguments and bets.

For the past four years the *San Francisco Chronicle Sporting Green* has printed the best sports questions put to the department each week. A check of the files show that the following are the queries most often asked when the fans start talking sports.

ANSWERS

1. No. Louis was knocked out in 12 rounds by Schmeling on June 19, 1936. At that time Jimmy Braddock held the title. Louis won on June 22, 1937, when he kayoed Braddock.
2. Yes, as a catcher with Cincinnati, the New York Americans and the St. Louis Browns.
3. Soldier Field, Chicago (178,000); Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum (105,000); and Municipal Stadium, Philadelphia (98,990).
4. Tunney won both on decisions in ten rounds before 15 rounds was the championship distance.
5. If no fielder bobbled the ball and it settles between home and first base or home and third base, it is a fair ball.
6. Yes, once on Jan. 1, 1925 when they defeated Stanford, 27-10.
7. Reese stands 5-10, Rizzuto 5-6.
8. Joe Walcott, Max Schmeling, Jimmy Braddock, Buddy Baer, Tony Galento and Rocky Marciano.
9. Frank Wykoff of USC in 1930.
10. Although stories have it that the pass went from 65 to 85 yards, the distance was actually 53 yards.
11. Both Jones and Hogan have won four Opens.
12. The New York commission says a fight ending between rounds reverts to the previous round. However, if the bell sounds for the next round, the contest ends at that round. The N.B.A. scores the knockout as occurring in the round coming up.
13. Willard scaled 245 and Dempsey 187, although some claim Dempsey was only 180.
14. Citation won \$1,085,760; Stykie \$918,485.
15. Yes, they won once in 1944, then lost to the Cardinals in the World Series, four games to two.
16. Walcott (real name Arnold Raymond Cream) was born in Pennsauken, N.J., Jan. 31, 1914.
17. Jake LaMotta, Randy Turpin and Joey Maxim have beaten Robinson. Jose Basora and Henry Brimm held him to a draw.
18. No, it was Tony Lazzeri who was fanned by Grover Cleveland Alexander.
19. Notre Dame had 23 victories, Army seven, with four ties in the series which was played from 1913 through 1947 with no game in 1918.
20. Rules of scoring state: "Credit the starting pitcher with a game won if he has pitched at least five complete innings and his team not only is in the lead when he is replaced but remains in the lead for the remainder of the game. This is for all games of six innings or more."
21. Basketball, with a paid attendance of 105 million annually, heads the list. Softball attracts more spectators—from 125 to 130 million—but only 7,500,000 of these are "paid attendance."
22. Rules of Racing state: "No jockey shall bet on any race except through the owner of and on the horse which he rides."
23. Zale retained his middleweight title on a sixth-round KO in New York (1946) and then lost it in Chicago (1947) by a KO in the sixth. In Newark, N.J., a year later, Zale regained his crown with a KO in the third round.
24. DiMaggio .325 (1936-1951 with three years military service); Williams .348 (1939-1953 with almost four seasons in the Marines in two wars) and Musial .345 (1941-1953 with one year of military service).
25. In six instances pitchers have lost after pitching nine—or more—hitless, runless innings. In each case the hitless string was broken in extra innings. •





COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

Red terrorists in the rubber plantations of Malaya threatened the life of the only girl I dared love, but I couldn't stop to help her. I was already accused of murder.

By A. S. FLEISCHMAN

The Girl from Lavender Street

It was hot. It was hot and fatigue was catching up with me. An early squall had wet down the rambling Singapore skyline and now the twin hangars of Kallang Airport steamed under the fierce, mid-morning sun. I paid off the taxi, carried my bag to the ticket counter and nodded to the spare Britisher on the other side. "When's the next flight?"

"To where, sir?"

"I'm not particular."

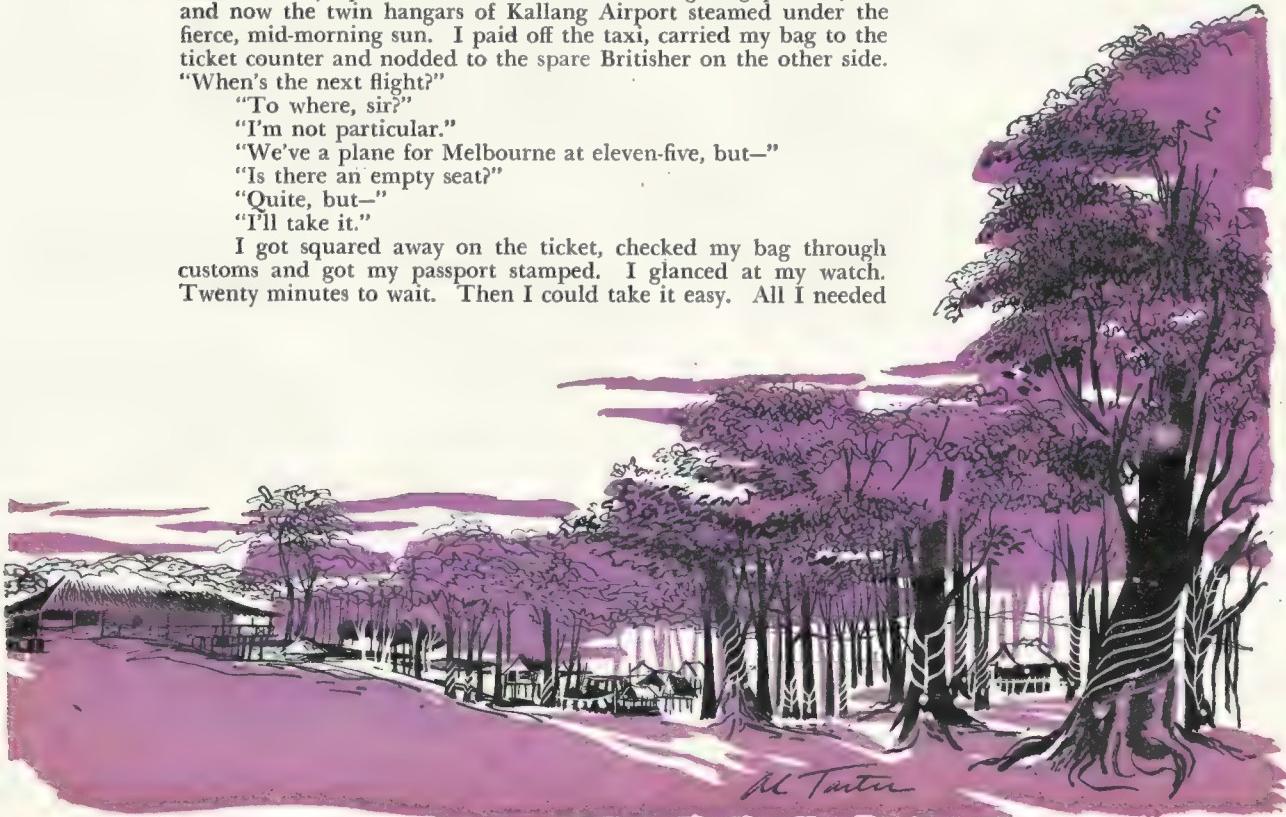
"We've a plane for Melbourne at eleven-fifteen, but—"

"Is there an empty seat?"

"Quite, but—"

"I'll take it."

I got squared away on the ticket, checked my bag through customs and got my passport stamped. I glanced at my watch. Twenty minutes to wait. Then I could take it easy. All I needed



was for my luck to hold out another twenty minutes. The big thing was to put a lot of sea miles between Inspector Kris in Sumatra and Jock Hamilton, me. Fast.

Twenty minutes. There was time to call Gabb, I thought. I'd feel like a bastard running out without letting him know and telling him goodby. Even if the call were somehow traced I'd be out of reach before it could be followed up.

I got the long distance operator before I could change my mind, and lit another cigarette.

"Person to person," I said. "Gabriel Wing, Silver Jubilee Rubber Estate, Kuala Tang, Selangor. I'll hold on."

I OPENED the door a crack for air and glanced out at the crowded waiting room. After a moment a voice broke in over the loudspeakers announcing the morning flight to Melbourne. From Melbourne, I decided, I'd grab a freighter for the States. Or Mexico. Or Panama. Or anywhere it was headed. What did it matter? I'd get used to living without Eden, my wife.

"Can't you hurry it up, operator?"

My wife. It was a bitter taste on my lips. How many guys had there been? It couldn't have begun and ended with the young Javanese headman on the Number Three *kaboon* in Sumatra. I remembered Eden's shopping trips to Singapore. Every few weeks. For three years she had been a thousand Greek goddesses turned into one long-legged American blonde. But Monday morning the marble had cracked and I saw that she had been rotten, a beautiful counterfeit. But I hadn't shot her. I was sure I hadn't shot her. And now I really didn't care who killed her and I wasn't going to get morbid about it. I was going to get clear of the mess, and forget it.

"Wing here!"

It was Gabb's clipped, robust voice and it put a smile on my face. I could see him at the rattan table 300 miles up the west coast of Malaya, a giant, curly-haired Eurasian, half black Irish and half Singapore Chinese, and the only guy in the East I really cared about. I was going to miss him.

"Hello, Gabb," I said.

There was a pause. No one called him that any more and I thought he'd catch on fast.

"Singapore? What is this, a wrong number?"

"Wake up, Gabb," I muttered. I hated to mention my name over the phone but there wasn't time to fool around. "It's Jock Hamilton."

"Who?"

"Jock—"

"There's a mistake." His voice was cold. "I don't know any such party."

"Listen to me, Gabb." Sweat was trickling down my wrist. There was no time to argue. "I've got to make it fast so listen closely. I'm through in Sumatra. I've left the plantation. I'm taking a plane out of here in a few minutes and I'm calling to tell—"

"I couldn't be less interested," he cut in. "Check the operator. She's given you the wrong number."

There was a click in the earpiece, like the sound of a cricket.

"Gabb—"

I could feel the heat of my breath bounce back from the mouthpiece. A chill cut through me. This was crazy. I'd know Gabb's voice anywhere—there had been no mistake. He'd introduced me to Eden, and I wondered if somehow the news had reached Silver Jubilee. I hung up slowly, my mind spinning. My world had begun coming apart at the seams about thirty hours ago and this seemed the final kick in the face.

An Indian woman in heavy jewelry and a purple *sari* went into the booth. I stood for a moment in the salt breeze that swept through the waiting room and it made me aware of the sweat-dampness of my suit. I watched the Melbourne passengers gather at the field door. I crossed to the newsstand and bought a copy of the *Straits Times* to read on the plane. When I looked at my watch I realized the line was being held up at the door. My restlessness sharpened. And then it came, a sudden announcement over the loudspeakers.

"Attention please. British Imperial Airways flight two-seven-four to Melbourne, Australia is delayed one-half hour. Attention please . . ."

I watched the other passengers drift away from the door, but for a moment I stood there frozen. My call to Gabb—no, that didn't make sense. Inspector Kris is still looking in Sumatra. Relax.

I took a bench away from the others and opened my paper. I glanced quickly at the heads, but there was no story about the Sumatra murder. I skimmed through the pages a second time.

Nothing. Okay, Inspector Kris was sitting on it. It had cost him face when I'd gotten away and he wouldn't advertise it in the papers unless he had to. My eyes lit on a story date-lined Selangor. More than eighty young rubber trees had been slashed on the Jade Tiger estate in a fresh outbreak of Red terrorism. Jade Tiger—I remembered. It lay just across the river from Silver Jubilee. I wondered if Gabb were having

bandit trouble again. Even so that didn't explain his behavior over the phone.

Then I saw them walk in.

The police.

I turned my back slowly, and it took me a couple of seconds to get hold of myself. The police. Two Malay constables and a Britisher in whites.

They shouldered their way through the crowd toward the passport control desk. I tried to tell myself they couldn't have come looking for me, but I was kidding myself and I knew it. I risked another glance across the room. The Englishman put on a pair of glasses and began to check the passenger list.

And that included me.

"Don't get rattled, tuan, I thought bitterly. They couldn't know you on sight. Don't try to figure it out. Walk out. There's still time. It'll take them minutes checking around the place for you."

I got half-way across the floor and my name burst out of a thousand loudspeakers.

"Mr. Jock Hamilton—telephone."

"Mr. Jock Hamilton—telephone."

"Mr. Jock Hamilton—telephone."

I felt as if a spotlight had been flashed on me and my blood went cold. I was scared and I knew it. I shouldered past a knot of tourists and kept my eyes on the glass doors. Only a little way further. Did the inspector in whites think he could lure me out of the crowd with a phony call?

THE doors were open for the breeze. I got through them.

My eyes squinted in the unshaded sun, and I kept walking. It was a moment before I recognized the police car parked in front, and then I saw the Malay in khaki watching me. I kept going, but he took a step toward me and I knew I was going to get stopped. For an instant, my mind froze.

He had broad, cinnamon cheeks and a British accent. "Orders, tuan," he said, touching his cap. "I must see your identity card."

He seemed uncertain of himself. Maybe he'd been told to watch for an American, but I'd lost the obvious tags years ago. I was wearing a pair of English Veldtschoen, my linen suit was cut by a Chinese tailor and the ends of my hair and my heavy eyebrows were bleached by the tropical sun. There was a chance, I thought, that I could bluff my way past this guy.

"What's the trouble?" I asked.

"Routine, tuan."

His eyes settled on the deep scar at the base of my thumb. It meant something to him, and I knew then the Singapore police had a description

of me. He was a little guy and I was born big, but I knew I was going to have to hit him. He took a step backward and reached for his whistle. I swung. I hit him harder than I wanted too, and I was sorry.

He went clattering back into the fender of the police car and I ran. The driveway was lined with taxis and one of the drivers began blasting his horn.

I cut across a patch of lawn and ran along the white siding of one of the hangers. Other taxi drivers picked up the signal and their horns turned the driveway into a bedlam. I began to feel like a two-bit criminal and it hurt.

ACROSS the highway I could see the rooftops of the Happy World amusement park and headed toward it. I was sure I had knocked out the Malay, but the taxi horns would bring the others out of the waiting room. There was nothing to do but take my chances. I wouldn't stand a chance if Inspector Kris got hold of me.

I reached the trees along Mountbatten Road and cut into the traffic lanes. I heard a police whistle begin to shrill above the clamor of taxi horns behind me.

I dodged traffic and got yelled at in half a dozen accents. I reached the far side, leaped down the steps and onto the amusement grounds.

The noon sun was blast-furnace hot and the wide lanes were almost deserted. I was wet. I could smell fresh pineapple and roasting goat meat and my stomach turned. I got out of the main lane, but there was no shade and I kept going in the sun.

Get to the other side, I thought. Get to Geylang Road. You might be able to flag down a taxi there.

I could hear police whistles, and nearby some Dutch soldiers were clanging away at clay tigers in a shooting gallery. The cops must be trying to stop traffic and get across the highway. I was doing fine.

I walked fast. It would be crazy to run. I hurried around a bank of sideshows just beginning to open up for the day. And then I could see the backside of the wooden entrance arch on Geylang.

I walked out, and luck was waiting for me. A taxi was just pulling out of the shallow drive and I whistled and ran for it. I got hold of the back door handle and the driver braked.

"Back to town," I said. "Make it fast."

"Yes, tuan."

The taxi was a pre-war Citroen with a motor that sounded like a truck. It had everything but speed. I kept watching behind until we crossed the swampy Kallang River. There was no one following. We

reached the intersection at Lavender Street where a turbaned Sikh constable raised his white gloves to interrupt the flow of Kallang traffic. We stopped and waited and I tried to relax. At noon Lavender Street looked like almost any other Singapore street; the square black-and-white opium smoking signs had long ago been taken down, but the Chandu shops were still there and so were the brothels and dance halls and street walkers.

The Sikh turned and waved us on. I settled back against the cracked leather seat and tried to light a cigarette, but my lighter wouldn't spark. I gave it up and got a light from the driver.

"The Raffles, tuan?"

"Just keep driving."

I tried to think. That had been close. Something had gone wrong, but I couldn't figure out where. The phone call—had Gabb been trying to reach me at the airport? Where do I go now?

I loosened my tie. Gabb—why not? Never mind the way he'd acted when I'd called. I'd be safe at Silver Jubilee if I could get there. It was remote. The highway didn't reach it. There would be only the mail boat at Kuala Tang to sweat out and the river traffic from Kuala Lumpur.

I liked the idea. I untold my newspaper, turned to the financial page and checked over the schedules of the Straits Steamship Company. If the Reds were fired up again, Gabb could use me. In his last letters he'd written that he'd been buying land and enlarging the estate and maybe I could oversee one of his new *kaboons*. I wanted to stop running and go on living, but the only thing I knew was rubber. It had been a crazy idea to run out on myself.

I saw that the S.S. *Perak* was sailing at three-thirty on a west coast run. That meant, I figured, it would get me to Kuala Tang sometime tomorrow morning. Inspector Kris would never trace me to Silver Jubilee and in six months or a year he'd forget me.

I PAID off the taxi a few blocks from the harbor and walked the hot pavement. If the police had been watching the airport for me, they'd be watching the docks. I couldn't risk buying passage and showing my passport. I didn't want Inspector Kris following me up the coast of Malaya.

I heard a drone in the sky and saw the silver flash of a plane banking above Victoria clock tower. The British Imperial Airways flight to Melbourne. I was glad to see it go without me. All I'd lost was my bag, and there hadn't been time for much the way I'd pulled out of Sumatra. At least I had a suit on my back and a

couple of hundred Straits dollars in my pocket.

The *Perak* looked old, but quite austere and intimidating, like a sea-going dowager. The cargo hatch stood open, and I could see dim lights inside the ship, but the dock coolies had knocked off during the noon heat.

My glance moved up the side of the ship and I watched two Malay seamen fixing a shade tarp across the bow stanchions on the main deck. The gangway and companionway were unattended. I looked at my watch. Almost three hours before sailing; the passengers hadn't begun to arrive and the police, I figured, wouldn't show up until later.

I didn't like the idea of holing up in the heat below deck. White men don't stowaway on these coastal runs, I told myself. Never mind the open cargo hatch. Walk aboard as if you had shore business up there. It's direct, and it'll work.

I glanced again at the gangway, creaking gently in the sun, and looked along the dock. It wouldn't stay deserted long. In the shade of the next godown I saw half a dozen coolies on their haunches around some coins, gambling against which one the next fly will land on. They didn't know I existed.

I STRAIGHTENED my shoulders and walked back into the sun. I crossed the hot concrete to the gangway and started up. Maybe I'd taken half the length when a sunburned ship's officer appeared at the top. He started down in a rush.

I kept going. We met and he touched his black visor.

"Pardon me, old chap."

We passed each other and I took a breath. He had something on his mind, but it wasn't me. Now I was glad I didn't have my suitcase; I didn't look like a passenger.

I reached the deck landing and kept walking. I could hear a clatter of dishes from the galley and there was a smell of curry in the air. I went up the nearest ladder, and Singapore's steep tile rooftops spread out before me. If I were lucky I'd pick a cabin that would sail empty, and I figured my best chances were in first class.

Tomorrow I'd worry about getting off.

I turned into the passageway. Clear. Louvered doors stood open from the cabins. I could hear dance music coming from the radio shack and it made me aware that life was going on around me even if I couldn't see it. A steward appeared at the other end of the passageway and I kept moving. I crossed to the port side, saw no one, and walked into an after cabin. It was done.

I glanced around quickly. I'd have

to leave the door open as it was. The cabin was panelled in mahogany and smelled of furniture polish. The bulkhead fan was off and the room was stuffy. It was done, but I couldn't just stand there. The bathroom was out, but there was the wardrobe closet. I opened one of the two doors and decided it would do. Later, if someone checked into the cabin I could leave when it was clear, maybe dinner time. I walked in, closed the door and settled against the bulkhead to wait.

The closet was hot and airless and within half-an-hour I was sitting in my own sweat. I tried to doze off to kill time, but my nerves wouldn't ease up. I was too tired to sleep. Memories plunged in on me. I remembered a thousand Edens—Eden sitting with Gabb at the bar of the Raffles Hotel the first time I saw her. Eden yelling herself wild at the race track at Bukit Timah. Eden in a tight print dress. The love and the sudden fights and the illusion of being in love. Eden dead and bloody in that green dinner dress she'd just brought back from Robinson's in Singapore.

The slick-haired Javanese who admitted he'd slept with her. Inspector Kris. The crazy shock, the wildness, and the daze. And then the running away. Not from Inspector Kris. From Eden. All I remembered was waking up Monday morning with a bad head when I knew I hadn't been drunk the night before. A taste in my mouth. And I saw Eden on the rattan rug, the green dress and the blood. She'd been dead for hours. The flies had come.

I MUST have dozed off. I became conscious of new sounds around me—passengers coming aboard. My senses sharpened. It must have taken another hour, but finally I heard the thick blast of the whistle. My hopes soared. The cabin was going unoccupied. It was a break. Once we got underway I could get out of here for a while. I'd find the bar and get a drink. I'd pass for just another passenger.

I felt the ship's throbbing as if it were my own pulse amplified. I heard a shout of voices from the dockside and realized the lines had been cast off.

At almost the same time I heard the scrape of a suitcase beside me, and my hopes died. The fan was snapped on. I had company. I might be stuck in this closet for hours.

Voces came very clearly into the closet.

"Shut the door, Hoven." English. A gruff, Dutch voice answered. "What about the gun? You got it aboard, ja?"

Chapter Two

I COULD HEAR the whir of the fan. I didn't want to listen to the conversation, but the two men were within a few feet of me.

"Piffle dust." It was the Englishman, and he sounded buoyant and amused. "We won't need a gun for this."

"I like better a gun," Hoven, the Dutchman, objected. "I like better to do things my own way."

"You're an elemental creature, Hoven, but I like you. And I suggest you keep your voice down."

"Never mind—"

"Sit down. Tell me, did she come aboard?"

"If you didn't almost miss the boat you would have seen her," Hoven said. "Ja, she came. Better you missed the boat. I can do the job alone, by myself."

"You wouldn't be thinking of the money, Hoven, would you? You ought to be grateful I'm willing to cut you in. But of course you're not. You're elemental. I wonder why I look after you."

"Never mind what I am, Edgett. I attend to business, not like you living the high life with empty pockets. Maybe you cut me out again, ja?"

"You're a bore, Hoven, but I like you."

I could hear the defiant chugging of tugs maneuvering the ship into the stream.

Hoven said, "So—you reached the buyer, ja? That's why you were late maybe."

"I was late, my punctual Dutch friend, because I'm never on time."

"Ach—"

"As a matter of fact I couldn't reach the Nabob. But there's no question about it. We do the job and he'll pay up. He always has. You're tight as a drum—relax."

"I should never have trusted my gun to you. Without a gun it is not so easy. With a pillow around the gun there is little noise."

"Leave it to me. I have talents."

"Ja, with women, you have talents."

"Exactly."

Hoven sighed. "She is pretty, this Allison woman. I wish maybe she isn't so pretty."

"Did you locate her stateroom?"

"She is on the other side of the ship. Cabin Eight."

"You're horribly efficient, Hoven. A true Dutchman. In another year you'll have saved enough to go back to the old country. Not, I suppose, that they'll have you."

"Never mind me," Hoven grumbled. "Why a man should want this woman dead I don't understand. She is so young."

"Ours not to reason why, Hoven.

Ours to collect a princely five thousand dollars."

"It is not so much when we split it."

"You forget, Hoven, in this business we compete with coolie labor. It's a good enough price in this part of the world."

"She's English, the girl?"

"Australian. Runs an upcountry plantation all by herself—her husband was killed last year by the bloody Reds."

"It's no life for a woman, all by herself."

"Stubborn as the weather, this one. She was in Singapore trying to hire an estate manager and it gave me a lively week scaring off any takers."

"You have worked often for this buyer, Edgett?"

"When the Nabob needs things done in Singapore, it's Will Edgett he knows to call. You ought to appreciate the contract that I've made for you."

Hoven didn't answer. The smell of cigarette smoke drifted through the closet door louvers and I wished desperately I could light up. I was starved for a smoke. The ship began to creak slowly and I knew we were under our own steam. I wished I could get up and get out. I'd already heard too much. If one of them decided to hang up a jacket and opened the wrong closet door—I tried not to think about it. Edgett sounded the nearest to me, and I thought he must be in the chair under the fan.

He said, "It'll be easy. There's nothing like a sea trip to start an idle romance. I shall have the Allison woman swept off her feet before we see the coast of Johore, Hoven."

"This one looks to me like she don't get swept off her feet."

"Piffle dust. They're all alike. A cocktail. The wind on deck and the sun setting behind the jungle. I'll charm her, Hoven. I'll bring delight to her last hours aboard ship."

"You're a machine, Edgett. You aren't human. Never mind you charm her."

"And in the dark hours on deck you will find us suitably cozy and alone in long chairs. Are you listening, Hoven?"

"Ja, I listen."

"Suddenly from behind her chair those fine strong hands of yours reach out for her lovely, lovely neck. I promise she won't utter a sound. My hand will be over her mouth. Then—a quick burial at sea. I shall perform services."

I rubbed the heavy sweat off my face. For all his rakish talk, this guy was a cheap, cold-blooded killer.

"Ja," Hoven muttered. "I suppose it will work."

Chapter Three

"Of course it will work. The ship is due in Malacca Town at two in the morning. We walk off. *Fini*. It may be weeks before she washes up among the mangroves. The fish will have pecked away at that tanned flesh and devour all evidence of foul play."

Hoven was impressed. "You have brains, Edgett, but still I don't like you."

"Piffle dust. I'm going to the bar."

"Ja, piffle dust. I take a nap now. But it is too hot to sleep."

I worked my knees slowly. We were left alone and I knew I was going to be stuck in this foul closet for hours. My skin felt raw and bruised and my bones ached. I needed a drink. I needed fresh air. I needed out.

You'll have to sit tight. Don't give yourself away, tuan. You've got to reach Silver Jubilee without a trace or it's no good. Sure, some planter's wife is about to be murdered. Kay Allison. A name. You can't stick your neck out, but you can't let it happen, can you? Even though she's just a name. Kay Allison.

Hoven stretched out on the bunk, and the springs creaked. Then I heard a newspaper crackle.

It must have taken him an hour to read that newspaper. I heard every page turn. I thought—if only he'd fall asleep I'd grab the chance of getting out of the cabin. But Hoven didn't sleep.

Hoven was in the bathroom when Edgett returned. I could hear a rumble as they talked briefly while Hoven washed up and the dinner gong sounded in the passageway. They stayed in the cabin about another fifteen minutes.

Then I heard the door close after them.

I was alone.

I waited about a minute. Then I opened the closet door and the shifting light in the cabin made my eyes squint. I went into the bathroom and put my face under the faucet and drank. I let my hair soak up cold water. I don't know how long I was in there. I felt dizzy and a little sick. But my head finally began to clear and I tried to clean up. I knew my suit looked a mess, like yesterday's laundry, and wondered if I'd be crazy to show myself on deck. Or in the bar. Well, I could get something tailored in Kuala Tang. I'd start feeling human again when I reached Silver Jubilee. Right now I needed a couple of stiff drinks.

I straightened my tie and peered at myself in the mirror. My face had taken on a gaunt, furrowed look and my eyes looked black and sightless. I was beginning to look like a beach-comber, I thought. I turned away from my gruesome reflection and

heard a key scrape in the outer door.

I froze. I glanced quickly around the small bathroom, then stepped away from the mirror and flattened myself against the far wall.

It was Edgett. I caught a flash of him in the mirror, a thin face with wavy, brushed hair. I heard the suitcase snap open. A moment later I knew he had a gun in his hand. I heard the soft click as he sprang the magazine, apparently to check it, and then the thrust as he snapped it back in position. Silence. I didn't breathe. I tried to trace any sound of him and I thought he must be at the bunks. If he stepped into the bathroom I'd jump him. Then I heard the rustle of cellophane, as if he were opening a fresh pack of cigarettes. He must have told Hoven he'd forgotten his cigarettes, I decided. *But he'd come back for the gun.*

"You're a fool, Hoven," he mumbled. "That's why I like you."

He walked out.

My muscles eased up. I'd been a jerk to let myself get trapped in here. Well, I'd been lucky, but I couldn't go on pressing my luck. I walked back into the cabin. Double-cross, I thought. Hoven was going to get the short end of a double-cross. The Englishman had recruited him for the fall guy, but that was Hoven's worry. Edgett was tricky and dangerous, and I'd better not let myself get in too deep. But at least I had to try to queer Kay Allison's murder.

Cabin Eight.

TALK to her—why not? If she were warned, and had any brains, she could look out for herself. Then I could start nosing around for a safe place to ride out the voyage.

I crossed to the starboard side and made up my mind to forget I was a stowaway. I'd be taken for a passenger—maybe a bit seedy—but no one was going to bother me.

I followed the numbers and found Kay Allison's cabin astern. I wondered if this were crazy—I could write an anonymous note. But would she believe a note? She'd think it were written by a lunatic.

I stared at the polished brass number on the door. Get it over with, I thought. I knocked.

There was no answer. I felt conspicuous standing in the open corridor and hit the wood harder. But it was no use—she wasn't in. She'd probably gone down to dinner.

It was a loose end, and I wanted to tie it up. I was annoyed at the delay. I tried the knob; the door wasn't locked. I had an impulse to walk in and wait her out. Then I changed my mind, left the door and started forward.

I needed a drink.

"A sundowner, tuan?"

The bartender had two gold teeth in front, and they glinted with his smile. The saloon was almost empty; the only other passenger at the bar was a white-faced Englishman in new linens. He looked young and green and straight from the London fog.

"A sundowner," I said.

A newspaper lay at the corner of the bar and I kept glancing at it. Stop worrying, I told myself. You checked the paper at the airport. There was nothing about you. Don't jump out of your skin every time you see a newspaper.

The Englishman looked my way with a timid smile. I ignored him; I was in no state of mind to get into a conversation with a brand new colonial. I watched the twilight fade into purple through the saloon windows and wished the Malay would hurry with my drink. An early bridge game was getting started on the port side. The ship had begun to pitch slowly.

My drink was worth waiting for.

The bartender moved away and I put my cigarettes on the bar. I got one between my lips and tried my lighter again. I wondered why I had taken it with me from Sumatra. It had been a gift from Eden on my birthday and it seemed crazy to be reminded of her every time I lit a cigarette.

"I say, let me give you a light." It was the young Britisher. He slipped off his stool and came closer with a pocket tin of Australian wax matches.

"Thanks."

"Going far?"

"Far," I said. I took a drag on the cigarette and held down the smoke, enjoying it. That had been too long to go without a cigarette. I wished the guy would go back to his stool.

I tried to get back to my own thoughts. I was sorry Kay Allison hadn't been in her cabin. I wondered what had built her up into a target for a pair of professional killers. She was worth \$5000 dead to someone—the buyer, the Nabob. I couldn't help admiring a woman trying to run a plantation by herself, but she must be doing a lousy job. No woman could handle the natives. Well, that was none of my business. I kept glancing at the newspaper.

"Do you know if there are any bandits around Kinta—the bloody Reds, I mean?" The Englishman was at it again.

"No, I don't know," I said.

"Can I buy you a drink?"

"I'm doing fine on this one." I caught the bartender's eye and nodded toward the newspaper. He brought it over and I flipped it open.

It was the *Straits Times*, but the front page was different and I became quickly apprehensive. It might be a later edition than the one I'd picked up at Kallang.

"Tell me, does one ever become accustomed to the heat out here?"

I skimmed the front page quickly. It was there.

SUMATRA MURDER SUSPECT EADES S'PORE POLICE

I left money on the bar and walked out with the newspaper in my hand.

I read the article on deck. A breeze sweeping off the bows rustled the paper in my hands and I held tight. I read quickly. Dangerous and probably armed, it said, and it gave a rundown of the break from Kallang Airport and the search that had followed in the maze of the Happy World. A cordon had been quickly thrown around the amusement park, but the American had slipped through "with criminal cunning."

There was no picture. I was relieved, even though I knew there couldn't have been. I had burned every snapshot in the house before I left the plantation. But there was a description, and it had me cold. Over six feet, rawboned, age about 30. Slate-blue eyes, cropped brown hair, deep scar on left hand, near thumb. *Approach with caution.* Exasperation kept me from reading to the end. They had written me up like a hardened criminal.

The air was freshening with the coming of night. I went down the ladder to the main deck and walked. I wondered if the Malay bartender had read the paper. I hadn't made any effort to keep my scarred hand out of sight. What about that little Britisher? I walked to the rail, twisted up the newspaper and gave it the deep six.

At least I knew where I stood. There would be other copies of the *Times* aboard. I'd have to be careful. Still, it was a break for me that the cops felt sure I couldn't get out of Singapore; there would be no alert outside the colony.

I TRIED Cabin Eight again. She hadn't come back. I stood in the passageway and my impatience turned to anger. How long did Kay Allison need for dinner? I couldn't afford to kill time wandering around the ship. I'd wait for her in the cabin. I wouldn't have to worry about myself in there.

The stateroom was dark. I shut the door after me, and it happened—fast. I heard a sudden rustle, my muscles grabbed, and then something hard jarred my head. I felt my hands slap the deck and noises spiraled in

my ears. I remembered trying wildly to get up, to reach out. I remember the shudder of rage and a shoe kicking into my stomach—and then the flash of pain dimmed and there was only a whirling suspended blackness and Eden laughing....

I heard the slow creaking of wood. There was the near fragrance of mimosa about me and a hot pounding in my head. My eyes opened, my eyes ached and I saw a tanned foot in a narrow, thong sandal. I stared at it, but for a moment it carried no meaning. A hand touched my shoulder and I tried to shake it off.

"You needn't—" A woman's voice, low and throaty.

THE sandals moved away and the room held a crazy silence, like time stretched into slow-motion. I shook my head, raised myself off the deck and I saw her, standing against the mahogany door.

"Shall I get the ship's doctor?" she asked.

"No."

"You're hurt."

"Forget it."

"But—"

"I said forget it."

I got off my hands and tried to find my balance. I could feel her eyes on me, cold, watching, sizing me up.

"Who are you?" she said.

"I'm not staying long enough to get acquainted."

"Rough as bags, aren't you?"

"Sure." I straightened and took a long look at her. She stood on long, tanned legs and her feet were bare in the leather sandals. She seemed younger than I had expected, and it came as a mild shock. This had to be Kay Allison, but she couldn't be more than twenty-five, I thought. Her nose and cheekbones had a thin scattering of freckles and except for lipstick she wore no makeup. The sun had put small wrinkles at the ends of her eyes. She wore her reddish-blond hair cut short for the heat and the dress was a sleeveless linen affair, smoke-gray, tight at the waist with a belt of silvered Mex dollars.

"You needn't stare at me," she said quickly. "I think you'd better—"

I noticed the low, square-cut neckline of her dress without really wanting to. There was something honest and genuine about her that made an automatic appeal to me and I felt a vague resentment. They all looked honest and genuine at first, like Eden.

"Kay Allison?" I muttered.

"Yes."

"Sit down. I've got to talk to you."

"I think you might tell me what you were doing in my stateroom."

"It's going to sound crazy," I said.

"I'm sure it will."

I rubbed my lips and then found

the rawness above my right ear. A gun butt? A gun butt—Edgett.

"I think I walked into a trap laid for you," I said. "If you're not going to sit down I will."

"You said you weren't staying that long."

She got a tin of Players out of her straw bag and lit up. I sat on the lower bunk and tried to rub the ache out of my eyes. I wondered when I'd ever felt so tired. "Does the name Edgett mean anything to you?" I asked.

She took a deep drag on her cigarette.

"Will Edgett," I said.

"We met this afternoon," she said in a low, soft voice.

"He made a pass at you, didn't he?"

"You might call it that."

"He plans to kill you."

If the idea startled her, she didn't show it. She turned from the port-hole and the coins at her waist flashed. "That's absurd."

She was a cool article, and it made me a little sore. "You asked what I was doing here—I'm telling you."

"Why should he want to kill me? It's—"

"There's a quick five thousand dollars in it for him," I said.

"What do you mean?" Her eyes, jade green and alert, steadied on me. She wasn't impressed.

"Edgett and a Dutchman named Hoven came aboard to kill you," I said. "Because they've been hired. Someone is putting up that much dough to get rid of a planter's widow named Kay Allison. You."

"Me."

"You think I'm making this up, don't you?"

"Aren't you? No one cares that much about me—dead or alive."

"You're wrong. The buyer, the Nabob. That's what they call him. I was in a position to overhear them planning it—never mind how, just start believing me."

She looked away. She wasn't buying it. If anything she seemed to resent me for suggesting the crazy idea. "Thanks for warning me. I can take care of myself."

There was a big hole in my story and I could tell that she saw it. Two men planning a killing wouldn't let themselves be overheard. It was absurd.

"Damnit," I said, "listen to me. Edgett expects to lure you on deck tonight. You'll be strangled and pitched overboard and they'll collect some chips for their troubles. That was the plan, but after what happened to me in here I'm not too sure of it now."

"If you think that I can be frightened—"

"No, I doubt if anything really frightens you." I started to turn away.

"Look—" Her shoulders gave a little. Maybe she had begun to play with the idea. Her eyes softened, but they kept trying to make sense out of me—the rumpled white suit, the scuffed shoes, the big, sun-darkened hands. My hand. I covered it quickly. She must have noticed it. I wondered if she'd seen the papers and how closely she'd read it. "Look," she said, "I don't go for terribly sure men with a flare for women—Edgett didn't get to first base with me this afternoon."

"Maybe that explains it," I said. The scar meant nothing to her, I thought. She wouldn't be talking to me this way.

"You aren't making sense."

"Believe me, I'm trying," I said. "Does this make sense? Edgett struck out with you this afternoon, and decided to wait in your cabin for you. I knocked at the door, something you wouldn't do, and it alerted him. He wasn't going to risk being found in your cabin when I opened the door. I just got it shut behind me and he worked fast. That's why you found me stretched-out in here."

The impact of murder was beginning to take hold of her, but she didn't lose her self-possession. "You're serious about this, aren't you?"

"I've got a headache that's very real." I stuck a cigarette between my lips and remembered my lighter wouldn't work. "I could use a light."

She came toward me slowly and fired a man's lighter. Her husband's, I thought. When I saw that her hand was shaking a little it startled me. This kid was human after all.

She said, "You're a planter, aren't you?"

It took me off guard. "What makes you ask that?"

"I'm interested."

"Forget it."

"There are things about you—"

"Like what?"

"Your hair looks like it was cut by a native boy."

"Wrong."

"Like a lot of little things. Planter?"

"Tourist," I said. "Look, if Edgett can't get to you any other way he might try a pot shot through the porthole while you're asleep in your bunk. I'd close it and cover it with something and be pretty careful about answering the door."

She glanced at the open porthole, circling a patch of night sky, and rubbed her arms as if she felt suddenly cold. For all her easy self-possession and pride, Kay Allison was scared, I thought. But there was nothing more I could do for her.

"I'll get going," I said.

"Am I supposed to lock myself in this cabin?"

"That's up to you."

Anger began to catch up with her and her eyes widened. "Is there any reason why the captain—"

"There is," I cut in. "Edgett and Hoven haven't committed any crime yet."

"But if you told him what you've been telling me—"

"I'm not interested in meeting the captain."

"I don't understand."

"I told you," I said. "Forget me. Forget what I look like, forget you ever saw me. I stuck my neck out coming here, and I don't expect you to understand that, but don't yak me into trouble you don't know anything about."

"You needn't raise your voice."

"I'm sorry."

"But even if I get through the night—there's tomorrow and the next day."

"I haven't thought it through that far. All I know is you're in danger tonight."

Her manner stiffened. "All right—thanks for warning me. I'm sorry about your headache. I'll look out for myself. Goodby."

It was a bad note to walk out on, but I couldn't think of anything more to say. I turned the knob. "Good luck."

But even as I walked out I knew it was no good. I'd been crazy to let myself get personally involved. She had no intention of sticking to her cabin—I could feel it. It would be an

act of intimidation and she wasn't going to let herself be pushed that far.

"I say—hello."

It was the green Britisher I'd met in the bar. I shut the door behind me and nodded.

"See here, we're neighbors. I'm just across the hall. Come in for a drink. I bought a bottle of Meukow brandy in Singapore—let's have a go at it."

"Save it for snake bite," I said, and walked away. I should have had brains enough to check the passage-way before I left the cabin. Now I'd been seen coming out of Kay Allison's cabin.

I walked out on deck and tried to shrug off my discomfort at seeing the guy. What if Edgett pulled off his murder? Kay Allison shot in her cabin. The little Britisher in his brand-new ducks would remember me for sure coming out of the cabin—he thought it was mine. I was easy to describe. If the ship were given a search I'd be turned up—a stowaway. A stowaway already wanted for murder.

I'd better figure out something fast.

Chapter Four

THE SALT AIR had picked up a chill and I threw up the collar of my coat. My frame ached the way it does after an attack of fever and I knew I was going to fold up pretty soon. I hadn't eaten since morning, but I didn't care about that. A place to sleep. Put Edgett and Hoven on ice



and start nosing around for a place to sleep. But I had to clear my head and think.

Waves broke from the bows in foamy claps of sound. I saw the lights of the saloon windows and thought: a drink would pull me through. A drink would cut the fuzz in my head. But even as I walked toward the lights I knew I wasn't going to go in. Not unless the place was empty.

It wasn't. I stood there peering in the window. I saw the bar and about three passengers drinking and the Malay setting out a plate of *kachang* seeds. I felt like an outcast and it hurt. There were others in the saloon, laughing, playing cards, reading the papers. I'd be a sap to walk in there.

I shrugged and turned away. Low clouds were riding in over the ship and the stars were sputtering and disappearing. It was going to rain, I thought. Great. That was all I needed.

I walked back toward the stern and tried to run things through my mind again. I hoped I was only kidding myself, but I knew I wasn't. If Kay Allison were found dead in her cabin, the little Englishman would remember me and I'd be turned up. Well, Kay Allison had begun to take my warning seriously, but that was as far as it went. She was a little scared, but mostly, I thought, she was angry. Beneath the resolute coolness, it seemed to me, Kay Allison had a temper. She might do anything.

Hell, she might even go to the captain. I should have anticipated that and done it all in a note. But I'd been right—she would have shrugged off a note.

WITHIN a few minutes I found myself back at the saloon windows. Spindrift flecked across my face like cold sparks. If I kept the scar on my hand out of sight, in my pocket. . . . No. All I needed was to have some guy get smart. Just one.

I saw a stiff-backed woman writing a letter at one of the desks along the far windows and the idea of the note hit me—but with a difference.

I saw the way out. I'd need paper and a pen. If only Kay Allison had brains enough to stick to her cabin until I could tie things up for her. And myself.

Paper and pen. Get it over with, kid. It wouldn't be like sitting at the bar. Take one of the desks along the wall and keep your back to the others. You won't be noticed. Risk it. You can't keep losing time. Edgett and Hoven won't wait.

I entered the saloon from one of the inside doors and turned down my coat collar. My hands were cold. I fell into a corner writing desk and could

hear card players behind me. There was a stick pen and a few sheets of the ship's stationery. I addressed an envelope to Edgett and Hoven, and hesitated, wondering how to start. Then I wrote:

Gentleman—

You characters couldn't conspire to tie your shoes and get away with it. If the Nabob (or the buyer, as you call him, Hoven) didn't have a sense of humor he'd have put coolie labor on the Kay Allison murder. And it wouldn't cost \$5000.

Forget it. If anything happens to Kay Allison you'll both get a quick trial. On the other hand, you may not get a trial at all. You might wash up among the mangroves along the coast.

Edgett, better tell Hoven you brought his gun aboard after all. He likes better a gun. As you said, he's an elemental creature. But I don't think he's going to like you for planning a double-cross. I have a couple of theories on how you might have brought it off, but you won't be doing anything. You'll just be sitting tight until Malacca Town.

Piffle dust.

I'll be watching to see that you both walk off the ship at 2 a.m. It's not a bad hour to get drunk.

Watching.

I thought for a moment and then signed it *Pawang*—witch doctor.

I sealed it in the envelope and began to grin. They'd still be wondering in Malacca Town how it could have happened. They'd be crazy to touch Kay Allison.

The important thing was to get the note to them before they acted. I wondered if either of them had come into the bar.

I rose from the desk and risked a glance. I didn't see Edgett. I didn't see Hoven.

I saw Kay Allison. At the bar.

I wiped my lips. The bartender was setting a pink drink in front of her. She knew I was here, I thought, she must have seen me when she walked in. She crossed her tanned legs and the coins at her waist glinted like mirrors. There was a stubborn tilt to her chin, as if she were asking for trouble and knew it.

It came as I stood there. Edgett.

He paused in the far doorway, a cigarette between his red lips, a starched handkerchief foppishly stuck in his breast pocket. He had his eye on the bar and started across the saloon. He didn't look my way.

I couldn't make myself leave. Edgett took the empty barstool next to Kay Allison. I slipped the envelope in my pocket. That would have to wait. Something was going to happen and right away. With a

gun in his pocket he might softly attempt to force her out on deck. I wondered if Hoven were waiting out there.

Edgett snapped his fingers for the Malay, ordered a drink and checked the back of his hair with his long fingers. Near me a newspaper rustled, and I knew I was crazy to stand around this way. Hell, I had myself to worry about.

He turned. He began talking to Kay Allison. I watched the thin, grinning movement of his lips and wanted to cross over and break it up before it got started.

And then it came—but not the way I'd expected.

KAY ALLISON slipped one long leg off the stool and her hand flew. She slapped him hard. The clap came as a rifle shot in the quiet saloon, suspending all movement.

Edgett took it. He sat there like so much stone. It must have astonished him and he was obviously trying to keep a grip on his composure. His face was white. Kay Allison had humiliated him in front of more than a dozen passengers, and he'd make her pay for it. But not here.

His drink came. He knocked it over with the back of his hand, threw a bill on the bar and strode out, still-backed, even smiling a little.

It was over.

A murmur spread through the saloon. One of the card players began riffling the deck and someone laughed.

I couldn't take my eyes off Kay Allison. She picked up her pink glass, and if there was a nerve in her body it didn't show. She looked beautiful sitting there, a tanned figure in a smoke-gray dress. Her short, copperish hair gleamed. She was right, I thought. She could take care of herself. I felt like buying her a drink.

As I watched she began to turn, glancing across the saloon. Our eyes met, and she knew I'd been watching. Had she put on this little show for my benefit?

I made a gesture toward deck. I'd better put her straight fast. I watched her pick up the tin of cigarettes, then I left.

I was waiting on deck when she came out, carrying her drink and the faint fragrance of mimosa.

"Did I do all right?" she asked.

"You're an elemental creature," I said. "But I like you."

"If you want to know the truth I'm scared." The wind rustled her hair. "Let's walk."

"You're going to your cabin."

"You think I'm a fool, don't you?"

"I think you've got what it takes. Come on."

"It was really funny. He turned to me and said it looked like we were

in for a bit of a squall and that's when I slapped him. You should have seen his face. He thinks he's rough as bags, but that stopped him."

"I saw his face. Don't be too sure."

"With all those people watching—he wouldn't dare touch me now."

I took her arm and made her start walking with me. "There's Hoven—"

"You're making me spill my drink."

I stopped and took the glass out of her fingers. It was a pink gin, but it would do. I swallowed it in a couple of gulps and heaved the glass overboard.

"I'm old enough to drink, you know," she said.

"But too old to spank."

"Don't be angry with me."

"Look, Mrs. Allison—"

"Kay."

"Mrs. Allison. Do me a favor—lay low for just a little while. I finally used my head and I think we can stop worrying about this thing. I'll tell you about my plan, but will you please do what I say?"

"Oh, now you're getting rough as bags."

THE rain struck. It came in big, splattering drops and I rushed her toward her cabin door.

"I don't even know your name."

"Does it matter?"

"There's something strange about you. I'm intrigued."

"Forget me."

"You keep saying that."

"I keep meaning it."

She had hung a sharkskin jacket over the porthole. I felt silly doing it, but I checked the bathroom and the closet. No one.

"I guess you'll live," I said.

"Don't go yet."

"I'll be back. And I'll explain."

"Don't go."

The exhilaration was wearing thin; I could see the change in her eyes. She'd slapped Edgett, she'd gotten it out of her system, but she hadn't really solved anything. "Look, I thought about seeing the captain, but I didn't. I began to worry about you. I suppose that was crazy when my life is at stake, but there was something about you—"

"This can wait."

"I don't want it to wait. You've got to see the captain with me and have these men arrested."

"No."

"But why?"

I could hear the rain blowing along deck and the sound depressed me. "It wouldn't do any good," I said. "Edgett could easily talk his way out of it."

"That's not why."

"I suppose it isn't."

"Then I'll go myself."

"I told you I've got the situation

licked. These two jokers will leave the ship at Malacca. I promise you."

"But don't you see—I've got to find out who hired them. There's tomorrow to worry about."

"I'm sorry. I can't help you there."

"You're maddening!" Her eyes flared. "I'm not going to let myself be killed. Even if these two men leave the ship—"

"Look," I said patiently. Why not tell her and get it over with? I couldn't keep going round and round on it. She wouldn't give me away, and it would be that much easier. "Look, I can't see the captain with you, and if you involve me I'm sunk. I don't belong on this ship. I'm a stowaway."

Her eyebrows tilted. There was an awkward silence, and then her voice softened. "A stowaway—"

"I was hiding in the closet of their stateroom. That's how I happened to hear them talk about the Nabob and the five thousand dollars and Kay Allison."

She looked away, as if she were suddenly embarrassed. "I must seem terribly ungrateful—I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get hysterical."

"You didn't."

She bounced the lighter in her palm and smiled. "I've never met a stowaway before."

"I've never been one before."

She smiled. "Where does a stowaway sleep?"

"I'll let you know in the morning."

She moved away on her sandalled feet and turned, studying me as if she were seeing me for the first time. "There's an empty bunk in here."

"Look, don't worry about me."

"I'd feel safer with someone here. Really."

She wasn't kidding anyone, but I liked her for trying. At the same time she managed to make it clear; she was offering an empty bunk and that was all.

"Well?" she muttered.

I knew I looked like a big, sweaty bum, but that didn't seem to bother her. I was tired and sweated out and God it would feel good to take a shower. And to sleep between sheets.

"Okay," I said. "And thanks."

Chapter Five

WHEN I GOT BACK from Edgett's cabin, Kay Allison was in the shower. Either Hoven or Edgett had been in. I had seen the fence of light through the door louvers and I had heard someone rustling around inside. I had shot the note under the door. It must be getting a reading right now, I thought.

Kay Allison came out of the bathroom and I turned.

She looked different. Her hair was wet and towelled and darker. She had wrapped herself in a man-size pongee kimono—her husband's, I thought—and it made her seem smaller and even fragile. She wore fluffy yellow mules and she trailed the fresh scent of soap and powder as she crossed past me to the dressing table. Her eyes avoided me, her nose was shiny and I felt like an intruder.

"Is it done?" she asked softly.

"Done."

"Then I suppose there's nothing to do but wait."

"I suppose," I said. They must have gotten together on the note by now, I thought. They ought to be going nuts trying to figure out where they had fouled themselves. I liked the idea. "Okay if I wait in the shower?"

She sat at the dressing table, the pongee sleeves hanging from her tanned elbows, and went on towelling her hair. But she didn't answer. I shrugged and walked into the bathroom.

I stripped and turned the water on hot and pelting. I stood under it for a couple of minutes just letting the spray hit my skin and take some of the ache out of my bones. I soaped and washed off and let my mind stall. I wanted to stand there forever.

When I turned off the water the room was steamed up, but for the first time since I'd left Sumatra I felt fresh and clean and alive, and it was good. Well, tomorrow I'd be at Silver Jubilee and maybe I could forget. Tomorrow Kay Allison will have passed out of my life, and that was just as well.

I CAME out of the bathroom barefooted, put my shoes on the floor of the closet and hung up my shirt, blotchy with sweat. It would be dry by morning. I turned and ran a hand through my wet hair. Kay Allison was still at the dressing table. Kay put down the hair brush and looked at me in the mirror. "You don't have to tell me your name," she said.

"Jack." That was close enough.

"You lied to me, didn't you, Jack?"

"I probably did. About what?"

"You said you weren't a planter."

"Does it make any difference?"

"Yes."

"Then I'm a planter."

She turned from the mirror and faced me. "I was admiring your lighter. It has acid stains on it—acetic acid makes stains like that. But I was only guessing, except that you don't look like a tourist."

"The hell it has," I said. She had the lighter on the dressing table and I picked it up. There were stains on it. You use acetic acid to coagulate latex in the big vats, and it had shaped

up her guess. But it was crazy, because I'd never noticed the stains before and I didn't remember ever dropping the lighter around the factory room. Maybe I was so used to handling it I had stopped really seeing it. But as I looked at it now I wondered if it was my lighter at all. And that was crazy, because it had to be. It was one of the few things I'd taken with me from the plantation in Sumatra and I'd never seen another like it.

"Was it supposed to be a secret?" she muttered.

"What?"

"Your being a planter."

"No," I said. She knew I was a stowaway, she knew I was a planter and tomorrow I'd be gone. What difference did it make?

"I've never met a Yank planter," she said.

"There are a few punks like me."

"How did—"

"How does it happen to anyone?"

I really didn't want to talk about it and wished she'd give it up. "You need money and money grows on trees out here. That's my life story."

Kay Allison had something on her mind and I realized she was warming up to it. "I was in Singapore trying to hire an overseer," she said.

"I know."

"Something frightened them off."

"The Piffle Dust Kid."

"What?"

"Edgett. I overheard that too. He'd been hired to put pressure on any takers you might have had."

"But why?"

"You must know the answer to that. I don't."

"But I have no idea."

"Someone has put a price on your head," I said. "You must have some idea who's behind all this."

"That's what so maddening—I don't."

I watched her face and wondered if she were only pretending. You don't make enemies without knowing it. She had an enemy and it looked to me as if he not only wanted to kill her but louse up her plantation as well. Without an overseer it would go to pot.

"Think about it," I said. "Sure it's a new idea to you that someone's on your back. You must have crossed someone and crossed him so it hurt."

"That's absurd."

"I wouldn't know."

"Wait—there was a Chinese working for me that I had to sack. He was headman of some contract workers, but he was always drinking and leaving bottles around and the mosquitoes would breed in them. I suppose he really hated me, but that was months ago. I haven't seen him since."

"That's a start."

"The only other person I could imagine wanting to hurt me is a retired planter I know in Singapore.

He wanted to marry me and was crushed when I turned him down. But I'm sure he—"

"What's his name?"

"Tom Bayfield."

"Tom Bayfield the Nabob. Maybe it fits."

"He does have a rather violent temper. But it's unthinkable he'd do anything like this."

"Sure," I said. "Sure."

"Jack?"

"I'm going to turn in."

"The overseer's job—it's yours if you want it."

It stopped me. So that was why she'd been trying so hard to size me up. "Just like that?"

"Just like that."

I put out my cigarette and our eyes met again. "You don't know anything about me," I said. "There are planters and there are foul-ups."

"I'm willing to take the chance."

"You're crazy."

"I could get along with you—I'm sure of it. And I wouldn't interfere on the estate work."

"What happened to your last overseer?"

She didn't hesitate and I could tell she was going to be honest about it. "He broke his contract and walked off the plantation. He got the idea somehow that he was being poisoned. The one before that—"

"I think I get the idea."

"I'm not pretending the job's got bells on it." Absently, her fingers checked the neckline of the kimono. For all her airy poise there was, I thought, a certain innocence about her. "Things have gone to pot and there's plenty of hard work to be done. I'll keep running things if I have to. But I'm not fooling myself, Jack. I need a man on the estate and—"

"I'll do."

"Don't put it that way."

"Is that why you offered me the spare bunk, to con me?"

"I'm not trying to con you into anything."

"Well, I'm not looking for a job," I said.

"But—"

"Let's forget it."

"You needn't lose your temper."

I turned away. It would have been so easy to say yes, I thought, and it angered me that I had been tempted. She was offering the kind of job that appealed to me, but there was more. There was Kay Allison, and she was no longer just a name. She was flesh-and-blood, a long-legged kid someone wanted to kill, and I liked her. I had no business feeling anything. Sure, I was sharply conscious of the clean scent of a woman in the cabin with me and my eyes had strayed along the lace shadows beneath the pongee

"Well, I lost. That means I have to take something off, doesn't it?"

kimono. And maybe for a moment I'd thought it would be nice to go on seeing her, and that was crazy. I'd had it. I'd had it for a lifetime to come. *It will never be the same, tuan, never.* She is a woman and where is there earth that escapes the rain. She is no different from the others. *Eden.* . . .

She turned back to the mirror and picked up the brush again. "I didn't really expect you to take the job. Has Edgett frightened you off like the others?"

I held my fire and let it pass. Tomorrow I'd be at Silver Jubilee. I had my own headaches and she had hers and I couldn't see that two headaches were better than one.

I don't remember when she turned in. I had stretched out in my trousers on the upper bunk and fell asleep with the light in my eyes and the creaking of woodwork in my ears. The ship's bells kept rousing me, and then it was dark in the cabin, and after a couple of hours I knew I wouldn't stop hearing the bells until we left Malacca Town and the Nabob's hired hands behind. At one-thirty I got too restless to sleep any longer and climbed down from the bunk. I got my cigarette in the dark, but couldn't find her lighter and had to give it up. I sat heavily in the chair under the port and then I began to sense that something was wrong. The cabin was strangely quiet. The rain had passed.

Was I alone? The idea startled me. I couldn't hear the sounds of Kay's breathing—that was it—and a sort of panic came over me. Had Edgett and Hoven—

I stumbled out of the chair toward the lower bunk and reached out. There was empty air where her body should have been. My hands stopped on the flat sheets. *You are alone, tuan.*

Kay Allison was gone.

Chapter Six

I TUCKED in my shirt on the way out of the cabin.

The passageway was deserted. I got to Edgett's door and tried it. Unlocked. I shoved it open; the cabin was a dark, silent box. I hit the light switch.

The cabin was empty.

The Pawang note hadn't stopped them. They'd gotten to her, they'd lured her out of the cabin and I'd slept through it. My eyes burned and my stomach throbbed cold and hollow. *You are hours late, tuan. They murdered her and you slept.*

I loped along the wet decks. Edgett and Hoven couldn't have left the ship; they must be waiting somewhere to

go ashore. I saw beads of light along the coast—Malacca Town. We were coming in.

I saw no one. Life had vanished from the ship as if I were walking a derelict. The saloon windows were black. I passed toward the ladder for the main deck and a weak flare of light glanced off the windows, as if someone had lit a cigarette. I stopped. There was someone in the saloon.

The wooden door was tight from the weather. I got it open and walked in. The air held a cachet of stale cigar smoke and the empty furniture stretched through an infinity of darkness.

"I'm over here."

The red dot of a cigarette. At the bar.

Kay Allison's voice.

Leisurely I picked my way through the furniture to the bar. I was damned if I would let her know I had gone stumbling around the ship like a madman because suddenly I cared, suddenly she mattered.

"*Tabé, Tuan Besar,*" she greeted me.

"*Tabé.*" I sat next to her at the dark, empty bar and put a cigarette between my lips. "*The Tuan Besar* needs a light."

"Yes, Big Master."

"Maybe you like to drink alone in deserted bars," I said.

"If you came after a drink," she said with the air of a barfly, "the service is frightful."

"I came after you."

"How touching."

"Maybe I was a sap to come looking for you."

"Maybe you were."

"Maybe you couldn't sleep when there was a stowaway in your cabin."

"Do you know how long it took you to go to sleep in my cabin?"

"I'm glad you're so worried about the Nabob. He only wants to kill you."

"In the tropics a woman is old at twenty-seven, isn't she?"

"Sure," I said. "Ancient."

"Does it astonish you that I have been attractive to men?"

"No," I said. "It doesn't astonish me."

I finally caught on and it should have been funny, but it wasn't. She had had just enough alcohol to dissolve her jaunty self-possession, and I saw she was only a woman with a woman's crazy way of thinking. At first she had worried that I would try to crawl into her bunk, and when I hadn't it had been a kind of slap in the face. It was at least equal to her fear of Edgett and Hoven, a purely female equation.

"You might have been courteous enough to make a pass at me," she said.

"What would you have done?"

"I would have slapped you. Hard."

"Shall I tell you that you're pretty and I didn't want to be slapped? Hard?"

"The ship," she said, "is slowing down."

"Shall I tell you I took you for about age twenty-two? Shall I tell you that a woman trying to run a rubber plantation means something special to me, because I know what you're up against, and it killed me to turn down your job?"

"If you start feeling sorry for me I'll scream."

"Let me finish," I said. "You sized me up wrong, baby, better get that straight. You took me for a big, hard-working stiff down' on his luck, but it's only an optical illusion. I'm a fraud. I'm a mixed-up guy and I did you a favor when I turned you down: The best thing I can do is get out of your life fast."

"How very noble."

THREE was more, but I didn't say it. There was the Nabob and I wished I could stick around long enough to run interference and I felt like a coward because I couldn't.

"We're coming in," I said shortly. "I'm going on deck."

She was strangely silent once we left the saloon. The air smelled fresh of the tropics and the sea. The ship anchored out and a shore launch pulled away from the jetty and nosed toward us. I could hear stirrings of life below on the main deck and I began to feel like a gambler who had thrown the dice and was waiting for the numbers to come up.

"Edgett and Hoven must be down there waiting," I said. "Once they go ashore we can stop worrying for tonight."

"I stopped worrying," Kay Allison murmured, "when I met you."

"Piffle dust."

"I mean that, *Tuan Besar.*"

We stood at the rail and watched the charcoal shadow of the launch approach. Under the night sky Malacca Town slept on a forest of rickety piles along the sea. There was enough moon to brown the sails of the fishing boats in the river and the whole scene was impossibly peaceful. But I wasn't really watching it. I was sharply conscious of the scent of mimosa, Kay's perfume, as she stood beside me. I wished I could get rid of the chip I had on my shoulder. I wanted to be friends, if just for tonight.

The launch came into the gangway spotlight, and new passengers came aboard the *Perak*. We waited and we watched; there no longer seemed anything to say. Mail sacks, newspapers and luggage were thrown aboard the launch, and then the handful of pas-

sengers bound for Malacca Town started down the gangway from the main deck.

They appeared. Edgett and a hulk of a man with rounded, brooding shoulders. Hoven.

Kay's hands gripped the rail and her casual attitude vanished as the tense little scene unfolded below us.

"Jack—your plan worked!"

I felt no sense of victory. I just watched. "Exit Edgett and Hoven," I said.

We were left alone; there was nothing to worry about until morning, but I didn't feel like thinking about tomorrow. Kay turned and our eyes met. It was different. For a moment the lights of Malacca Town vanished. But the moment passed and she dropped her cigarette overboard.

"I just made a pass at you," I said.
"And I just slapped you."

Chapter Seven

I PICKED up my clothes and tried not to wake her. Dawn was breaking across the open porthole and a cool, soft breeze flowed into the cabin. Somehow it seemed necessary to leave without saying goodby. I didn't want her to know when I had left the ship. After Malacca Town we had made stops at Port Dickson and Port Swettenham; if she ever found out about me she couldn't pin-point me in Malaya.

I put on my coat and stood for a moment in the center of the cabin and tried to think. Did I have everything? From the lower bunk Kay's breathing was soft and intimate and trusting. I would never see her again, and I was sorry.

I left the cabin without looking back.

I rubbed my face and it was rough. I had to have a shave. I had to figure a way off the ship. We'd reach Kuala Tang in about three hours, but I couldn't wander around the ship with a beard. I was seedy enough without that. I'd look like a stowaway. I ran my fingers through my whiskers and thought of the green Englishman going out to the tin mines. He'd have a razor.

I went back along the passageway toward the Englishman's cabin. He'd probably be still asleep. Across from Kay's stateroom. I knocked lightly.

I knocked again. Harder.

Finally I heard his piping voice. "I say, I say—hold on."

The Englishman opened the door, and his face was pink and fuzzy with sleep. He stood barefooted in striped pajamas. It took him a moment to get me in focus and then his eyes brightened.

"I say, you fellows get up early out

here. I'll have to get the hang of that, eh?"

"You'll get the hang of it," I said. "Look, I just discovered I've forgotten to pack my razor. Any chance of borrowing your gear?"

"I'd be honored—but that's silly, isn't it? I mean to be honored if you'd use mine. I say, do come in."

I shut the door after me and he went toward his suitcase. He came up with a Rolls razor in a leather pouch, a brush with an ivory handle and shaving cream.

"Use my lavatory if you like," he said. "We can chat. Do stay a moment.

"Thanks."

"Tell me—did you see her?"

I picked up the gear and walked into the bathroom. "Who?"

"The girl I met in the saloon last night. I only just got to bed a few hours ago."

"Sounds like you had a real night."

"Oh, nothing like that. But it was rather exciting. I've promised to write her, of course. I wish you'd seen her! Marvelous black hair—she's part Portuguese."

I ran water into the basin and began lathering my face. "Swell."

"I hadn't expected to meet anyone Portuguese out here. Remarkable place, isn't it? Full of the unexpected. I suppose I'll get jolly well used to that."

"Swell."

"Of course, she's a bit older than I am, but we got along nicely. There is something about being aboard ship, isn't there?"

"Swell." I stropped the razor in its case and wondered what the hell he was talking about.

"Comes from a very old family in Malacca Town. You see, that's where the Portuguese comes into her family. Did you know the Portuguese settled Malacca Town?"

"I seem to have heard it somewhere."

"But then the Dutch came, and so she's part Dutch."

"It figures."

"I daresay. Exciting type, she was. Oh, I shall like it out here. You don't meet women like that in Blackpool."

"I daresay," I said.

"Of course, there was a bit of embarrassment at the end. You see, she had a hat box sort of thing and I insisted on carrying it to the gangway when the shore boat came alongside. A police official got out and boarded us—did you know that?"

The razor froze on my neck. "What did you say?"

"Police official—detective, I suppose. First thing he did was check the men on the main deck ready to go ashore on the little boat. You see, I still had

the hat box, or whatever it was, in my hand and he thought I was going ashore. I protested, of course—it was quite ridiculous—but you know the police mind."

"Yes," I said. I tried to go on shaving.

"Had an electric torch, he did, and asked me to show my hands. Well, once he saw my hands it made things all right somehow. Remarkable, don't you think? What do you suppose he was up to?"

He kept running on, but I stopped listening. A cop had come aboard from Malacca Town. They had traced me. How? The taxi driver? I should never have had him to take me so close to the wharves. But the cops couldn't be sure I had gotten aboard the *Perak*. But they undoubtedly had made some sort of check of the ship as soon as we pulled away from Malacca Town. They might decide to search the cabins now that it was morning. Hadn't this barefooted Britisher wondered about the scar on my hand? I'd better get out before he got a brainstorm.

"It seems a bit amusing now," he was saying. "But you see, when he flashed the light on my hands there was lipstick smudged on one of my fingers. It was really quite humiliating."

I rinsed the lather off my face and cleaned up his gear. I checked him in the mirror. He was lying in his bunk, his knees crossed, and he was stretching his pink toes. I cinched up my tie and got back into my coat. I put a cigarette between my lips. I'd hang around just long enough to get a light.

"Everything fine," he smiled when I came through the bathroom door.

"If I had a light, everything would be fine."

"Here—do take the box."

"Thanks."

"Jolly fine day, it looks like."

"Sure," I said. "Jolly fine."

FORWARD, I saw a crew washing down the fo'c'sle deck. Where do I hole up? In another half-hour first breakfast would rouse the passengers and the ship would come to life. Kay's troubles had gone ashore at Malacca Town, but mine had come aboard. The police. I turned and went aft and knew I had to get squared away fast.

I peered down at the after well deck. There was a mounted crane with orange metal housing, and I considered that. But if a search of the ship were made, I'd be trapped. I was damned if I was going to let myself be trapped. We were so close to Kuala Tang I could almost smell it. Three hours. All I had to do was last another three hours.

I glanced back at the white life-boats suspended from davits outward along the deck, and suddenly I saw it. I took a hungry drag on my cigarette, stepped on it and walked back.

I was on the starboard side and that wouldn't work. The starboard side would face Kuala Tang when we pulled in and the sightseers would be on that side of the ship. I'd look funny as hell coming out of a lifeboat in all that company.

I made it snappy to the port side, and luck ran out on me. There was someone on deck—a stocky colonial type in knee length khaki shorts. He stood at the rail watching a white tern that was pacing the ship. A bird-watcher.

I had to get rid of him. Fast.

I slowed my stride, and he turned with a hearty grin.

"Frigate bird," he announced.

Have it your way, I thought. But get lost. "There's a flock of green punais on the starboard side."

"Not really! Pigeons this far from shore?"

"They're nesting in some floating mangrove."

"You don't say! I must see that!"

"Better hurry."

He moved off briskly, with the air of a dedicated man. I watched him vanish along the deck and checked in the other direction. There was a breeze and you could feel the coming heat of the morning lurking behind it. I was alone. *Work fast, tuan.*

I stepped out between two lifeboats and undid the tarp at the bow of one of them. The sea was calm and so silent that the small noises I made seemed loud enough to wake the ship.

I got hold of the gunwale and worked myself under the tarp and into the dark grayness of the boat.

There'd be a rope inside. I found it. I moved along the outboard side of the hull, secured one end of the rope to an oar lock and made some heavy knots along the line. I loosened the tarp amidship on the outboard side, free enough that I could slip out quickly if I had to. Then I stretched out along the ribs of the boat. If the search came, I'd be ready.

I heard the breakfast chimes come and go. I heard bits of conversation, carried along like scraps of paper in the wind. The ends of the tarp made slapping noises and time dragged. I thought of a cigarette, but the smoke might catch someone's attention. I thought of Kay Allison. The Nabob. I thought of breakfast—and suddenly I was gripped with hunger.

Voces. Close. I came quickly alert. Footsteps had stopped outside the lifeboat.

"Is all this foolishness absolutely necessary?"

"I assure you, captain, it's not foolishness."

"See here, I haven't had a stowaway aboard my ship in over a year. The passengers are already beginning to wonder what's going on. I don't like it, I tell you."

"I shall have to question them if we don't turn the bounder up. We have a hunch that he got aboard your ship."

"Rot."

I felt a tapping of knuckles against the wooden hull. "Tell me, captain, do stowaways ever really hide out in lifeboats?"

"Utter fiction."

"So I suspect. Still, I should like a look."

They moved off and I figured they were starting with the end boat. I worked fast and quietly. I let the knotted line out over the seaward side of the boat, about three feet of it, enough to hang onto. Then I worked myself through the loosened tarp and outside the boat.

I held on like a monkey on a stick. I kept at a crouch, making myself as small as possible, hoping the lifeboat would shield me from the men on deck.

I watched the water glide beneath me. I could see shifting fragments of my own reflection down there, like something seen in a broken mirror. It looked like a long way down, and I raised my eyes.

THEY came. I could hear them. I could hear the rustle of canvas as one end of the tarp must have been pulled back. A leafy shadow passed over me, and I could almost feel it. The white tern crossing over the ship.

I took a firm grip above the knot with one hand and held the tarp edge in place above my head. How closely would they check the boat? A glance? They'd be looking for a man and a glance would tell them the lifeboat was empty.

I hung on.

"Quite empty, captain."

"It's utter fiction, you know."

"Shall we have a look at the life-boats on the starboard side?"

"The whole thing's preposterous."

"As long as it's preposterous, I should like to be thoroughly preposterous."

"We shall be stopping in half an hour. Will you want to go through that Scotland Yard stuff at the gangway again?"

"I'm afraid so."

Their voices drifted away on the breeze. I was staring at the sweat rolling down my wrist.

I hoisted myself back into the lifeboat and stretched out across the floor. My muscles were shaking. I let them shake.

Chapter Eight

THE SHIP'S whistle blasted over the water and echoed from the hills. Kuala Tang. We were coming in, but I couldn't swim ashore in a linen suit.

The heat of the day had started. I could see the sun in pin-pricks through the tarp, and the lifeboat was airless and hot. I was rolling in sweat.

Get to Kuala Tang without being spotted, I warned myself. Get to Silver Jubilee. Eight kilometers up a dusty road. So near it hurts.

I got out of my coat and stripped down to my trousers. I pulled off my shoes and socks. I got my pocket knife and cut the legs off my trousers at the thighs. They'd pass for hand-me-down shorts. I got my wallet, passport and odds and ends together. I buttoned the stuff in my two back pockets. There was no longer any point in holding onto the cigarette lighter Eden had given me. It didn't work and to hell with it. I tossed it overboard.

The ship's whistle blared again.

I remembered my other trips to Kuala Tang. I remembered the native boys diving for coppers when the boat anchored off the mouth of the river. The sun had long ago turned me as brown as a Malay. In the water I might pass. A bunch of screaming Malays and I'd pass.

Except for my hair. I cut a large square out of my shirt and tied it around my head. It would do for a *udeng*. It would have to do.

I could already hear the thump of the screws churning in reverse. We were stopping.

I felt around for something heavy. There was a small anchor and I cut it loose from its line. I gathered together my clothes and shoes and tied them to the anchor. It was important, I thought, to leave no sign that I had ever been around. I pulled in the rope I'd left dangling over the side, undid the knots and recoiled it.

I was ready. I would have to gamble that the port decks were deserted. I lifted the tarp and dropped the anchor over the side. The splash sounded like an explosion to me. I waited. No voices along deck. Nothing.

I wriggled out. The white brightness of the morning hurt my eyes and I squinted. I held onto the gunwale for a moment, took a breath, and let myself go.

The still water raced up for me. My feet shattered the surface, like a mirror, and the sea closed around me. I sank like a plummet and thrashed to stop myself. A shock of coolness swept over me and I floundered in a sort of violent slow motion. I rose along the monstrous white belly of the ship, almost luminous in the clear,

deep water. I broke through the surface and gulped for air.

Bumboats had met the *Perak* and the penny divers were there too, frolicking with a rubber ball and waiting for the coins to start coming.

I touched off with my feet and swam deep under water, coming up behind a sampan loaded high with a dozen tropical fruits. I started off again and a coin struck the water near me. I went down and met a thrashing swirl of brown arms and legs. I swam off to the right and came up behind the others. A young Malay broke surface and exhibited the coin between his chalky white teeth.

I KEPT low in the water, treading, and looked at the gleam of the sun on my wet, bronzed arms. I would pass from up there. I'd be more conspicuous streaking for shore—I might catch that cop's eye. Coins were in the air. No Malay would run out on that.

Why not wait it out—here in the water? Wait until the *Perak* left me behind. Stick with the divers until the ship took off?

It seemed the least risky, and I made up my mind.

"Me! Tuan! Mem! Throw me!"

The coins slacked off and the Malays started bouncing the rubber ball off the side of the ship. Suddenly I hated every passenger at the rail. The great white man's sport—throwing pennies to watch some poor kids fight under water for it.

Then I saw the shore launch ride in along the gangway. I risked a glance along the rail and wondered if I'd see Kay Allison anywhere up there. I didn't, and I was just as glad. She was a moment in my life, and it was finished.

I glanced back to the gangway and saw a couple of seamen going down with mail sacks and newspapers. There was a loose end I had to tie up. Once I reached shore I'd have to figure some way of killing yesterday's paper. I couldn't let that description of me get loose in Kuala Tang.

Finally, a couple of passengers started down for the launch. There came a flurry of coins and I dove. My wind was giving out and I decided to ease off. I had to last. When I came up for air I saw another passenger stepping down the gangway.

A woman.

Her white dress caught the morning sun. She wore a wide-brimmed hat. She moved down the steps, tall and composed, and she might have been any planter's wife coming home after a shopping trip to Singapore. But it wasn't any planter's wife.

It was Kay Allison.

"Tuan! Tuan! I catch! Tengok! Mel Tuan!"

I tried to shut the yells out of my ears. Kay Allison walking off the ship—had she recognized me down here? No—she wouldn't be crazy enough to leave the ship because of a guy she called Jack. There had to be a better reason. She belonged in Kuala Tang. Her plantation must be somewhere around here.

She was home.

I kept my face all but submerged and watched her board the launch. She sat under the canopy, across from the other two passengers, her back toward me. She didn't know I existed.

I don't know what kept the launch, but it hugged the gangway for at least another ten minutes. Finally the little bell clanged and the little engine roared. A few sampans in the way scattered and the boat started back for shore.

I stuck behind the divers and wished the *Perak* would get on its way. Kay Allison in Kuala Tang. I was sorry. Still, the rubber estates spread for miles over the hills and I might never see her again. It would be better that way.

I lost track of time. Hunger pains caught hold of me and I began to worry about a cramp. The ship's blast finally came. There was a final tracery of coins and the *Perak* began to move. The screws thumped. The divers and sampans turned for shore.

I spit water. I had made it. That cop from Malacca Town could go on inspecting the ship all the way to Panang.

A MALAY rested in the water and faced me with a grin.

"Tuan works hard for a penny."

I grinned back at him and tried to pass it off as a white man's lark. "Seronom sunggoh."

"Gila Betul!" he laughed, and swam away.

Sure, I thought, I was certainly crazy. He caught hold of a sampan going in and I followed his example. I got a boat of my own and let it tow me toward shore.

I kept my eyes on the jetty. The launch was tied up alongside and I wondered if there was any chance the newspapers hadn't yet been taken into town.

The sampan headed toward the native quarter and I dropped off about fifty yards from the jetty and began to swim for it. It turned into a long, agonizing haul. When I reached the ladder I didn't have muscles enough to go up and just held onto a rung trying to get back some wind. I could see the launch on the other side of the piles, lazing in the sun.

I dropped down the ladder and swam between the tarred piles. I

reached the launch and pulled myself over the side and looked in.

The newspapers were there, stacked on the floorboards with the sacks of mail.

I hoisted myself over. There were three bundles of papers under the canopy and I tried to work fast. I checked the dates. Three days' worth of the *Times*. I picked up yesterday's stack and lowered it quietly into the water. Then I let go. I watched it sink, flashing dully, to the bottom. A lot of planters were going to miss a day's news, and I was sorry.

I lowered myself into the water and worked my way ashore through the piles. I didn't feel like walking in as if the jetty were a red carpet.

I spread-eagled on a patch of beach at the edge of town and let the sun dry me. I had sent a native boy to buy me something to eat with a wet Straits dollar and he came back with fruit cradled in his sarong—a ripe durian that smelled terrible, a cluster of sausage-like bananas, some mangos, and a couple of ruby-skinned mangoes. He had probably picked up everything in his back yard, but I liked his broad-faced smile and decided to let him keep the dollar.

HE unsheathed his parang and cut into the thick, spiky hide of the durian. The fruit let out its sturdy fumes, but I had long ago learned to wade through the odor to the custard-like pulp, and I was hungry. He handed me the opened fruit and I told him he could take off.

He moved away reluctantly, as if the whole thing were a morning adventure that he hated to give up. He walked down the beach about thirty yards and sat in the sand, watching me eat.

I ignored him and ate. Flies came in on the durian like bees streaking for home and I had to give it up. I tossed it as far as I could, ate a couple of bananas and peeled a mangosteen.

The sun baked my muscles and I felt my strength come back. I had made it to Kuala Tang and my spirits began to buck up. The murder in Sumatra was a wide stretch of blue water away, a country away, a world away. I was safe.

I had to get some clothing. I couldn't walk around in a ragged pair of shorts. I headed for town.

I found some open-air stalls and picked up a pair of canvas shoes and went into a Chinese dry goods store and got fitted out with white ducks and a loud, short-sleeved sport shirt.

"Latest style from Singapore, master."

I paid up and left the store feeling as dressed up as a window dummy. I remembered a tailor shop near the

Planter's Club and walked up the hill. I got measured for a linen suit. It would be ready in twenty-four hours.

I was almost out of money, but it no longer mattered. I ought to be at Silver Jubilee before noon.

I decided against telephoning ahead and having Gabb send the car for me. After the mess that had followed my call from Singapore I didn't want to get anywhere near a phone.

I found Kuala Tang's only taxi shimmering in the sun opposite the government resthouse. The driver finally showed up, barefoot, fat as Buddha in a checked sarong, and just as happy looking.

"Do you know the road to Silver Jubilee?" I asked.

"My car is lacking armor, tuan."

"Get in and let's go."

"There are bandits on the roads," he protested, pointing in the general direction of Silver Jubilee.

He was trying to say, I thought, that he wouldn't take a white man along the plantation roads with the Reds acting up. He didn't want to have to collect his fare from a corpse.

"If I may suggest, tuan," he smiled anxiously. "Perhaps Tuan Wing will send one of his cars for you. They have armour as thick as the *penyu*—I wish I had such a car."

"I'll walk," I growled.

"I would not advise it, tuan. If I may suggest—only an hour ago I saw Tuan Wing's wife walking into the Planter's Club bar. Perhaps she is yet in town and would give you safe journey back."

"Tuan Wing's wife?"

"Yes, tuan."

I stared into his brown marble eyes. Gabb married? That was crazy; he hadn't written me a word about it. Or had he merely picked up a jungle wife?

"What does she look like?"

"Ah, pretty, tuan. There is no other in Kuala Tang like her. The *Tuan Besar* brought her from Singapore perhaps six months ago. It is said she is originally from Indo-China."

"She is French?"

"I know only the gossip." There was something close to a leer on his face, but I let it pass. "If you wish, I will help you find her," he went on. "But already, she may have returned to the kaboon."

"Sounds like I can spot her by myself," I said. "Thanks."

"*Tida apa.*" . . .

It took me less than ten minutes to cover the few streets of the European quarter. Why hadn't Gabb written me that he'd gotten married? I wondered how welcome I'd be around Silver Jubilee if Gabb had a wife around. I might mean trouble with the police, and he might not go for it.

The taxi driver hadn't told me all the gossip about her. He had kept the rest of it behind that leer. I began to feel uneasy.

I couldn't find her. I ended up along the river and decided it was crazy to be within a few miles of Silver Jubilee and not be able to get there.

I went back to Majid and his armored taxi. I threatened to beat hell out of him in two languages. I paid in advance and he finally agreed to drive me half-way to Silver Jubilee. That was the best I could do.

We followed the river, crossed a wooden bridge and within a few minutes we entered the jungle. Majid began to accelerate. There was an armored sedan stalled in the road ahead of us, and I saw it.

I leaned forward. "What the hell are you doing?"

"It's a trick, tuan!"

"Slow down!" I shouted. "They need help."

"Tuan—"

"Stop the car!"

He braked and as we drew closer I saw a Malay working under the hood. The jungle Reds couldn't move with an armored car, and I didn't think it was a trap. The sedan looked like a Mercury dipped in steel with slits where the windows had been. We pulled up behind it and I got out. The Malay came out from under the hood. He welcomed me with his eyes.

"Maybe I can help," I said.

There was a legend painted on the sedan door: Jade Tiger Plantation. I was glad we had stopped. It lay across the river from Gabb's estate and maybe I could get a lift all the way in. Jade Tiger. I remembered the piece I had read in the Singapore paper, the guerrilla trouble, the slashed rubber trees.

"I think the fuel line, tuan."

If this was a Red trick there was going to be a slaughter. Majid and me. I walked forward and then the door opened behind me. I spun. A woman stepped onto the road.

"Tabé, Big Master."

It was Kay Allison.

Chapter Nine

THERE WAS NO SURPRISE ON HER FACE. She took in my ducks and canvas shoes but her green eyes made no comment. She looked impossibly cool under the big hat, cool and pretty and composed.

"So you're Jade Tiger," I said.

"You can read," she said. "I keep learning things about you."

"Maybe I can fix your fuel line."

"I'm sure you can do anything."

This was no place to talk; I left her standing. The Malay had balanced a gun beside him on the fender, and I took over under the hood. It was about ten minutes before we had the engine running again. I wiped my hands and went back to Majid and



told him that he could go back to town.

Kay was waiting in the back seat and I stuck my head in the door. "I could use a lift."

"Get in."

I got in. The air conditioning had stopped working when the car stalled and the heavily armored car was an oven. I shut the door and we started to move. She lit a cigarette with her big tin lighter.

"Did you follow me ashore?" she asked through a breath of smoke.

"No," I said. "I didn't follow you."

"This road doesn't go very far."

"It goes far enough."

"Really?"

"Silver Jubilee."

Her eyes flashed my way. After a moment the jungle began to break apart and we passed an occasional *atah* hut and stray native rubber trees with varicose trunks. "I see."

Her reaction, like a chill, left me puzzled. "What does that mean?" I asked.

"It means we'll be neighbors."

I lit a cigarette and knew she was faking. But she had made a quick recovery and she was smiling again. I glanced through the window slit at the blocks of harsh sun that fell across the road. The jungle was gone; we were in the rubber. We were on the edge of some rolling estate and I could see an army of half-naked tappers laboring in the orderly green forest.

SHALL I make an absurd confession?" Kay said suddenly. "I was hoping you'd followed me ashore and had decided to oversee Jade Tiger. I was glad to see you."

"You gave a start when I mentioned Silver Jubilee."

"Did I?" A crescent-horned buffalo had wandered onto the road and the driver honked around him. "I suppose I was thinking of Monique."

"Is that Gabb's wife?"

"Haven't you met her?"

"Until an hour ago I didn't know she existed."

"She exists. You'll find that out."

"I can't wait. I take it you don't get along."

"Gabriel and I always have," she said grimly. "Oh, I can't really blame her. She's had things rough and now that she's the *mem* of a large estate I suppose she worries she'll wake up someday and find herself back in the streets. It must give her nightmares."

"Tell me more."

"There's not much more. Monique's terribly jealous. She won't let Gabriel set foot on Jade Tiger and I'm no longer welcome at Silver Jubilee. Do you suppose she hired those two men to kill me? It hadn't occurred to me before."

"You're not serious."

"The Nabob—she'd like to be called that, even if it is meant for a man. Monique the Nabob. Has a rather nice sound, don't you think?"

"Why should she be jealous of you?"

"Shall I make up a reason or tell you the silly truth?"

"I'll take the silly truth."

"She's made herself believe Gabriel and I were more than mere neighbors before he brought her to Silver Jubilee. I admire him, Jack, and he's funny and a lot of fun, but that's as far as it goes. I'm sure they have big scenes over me. Poor Gabriel!"

"Where the hell did he find her?"

"The silly truth again?"

"The silly truth."

"On Lavender Street in Singapore."

I winced. You could find anything on Singapore's boulevard of sin, none of it very pretty. "That doesn't necessarily mean—"

"We'll be charitable and say she was a dancer in one of the cafés. She does dance."

I wondered how much of this to mark off as one woman's cattiness toward another. I knew Gabb; this didn't sound like anyone he would marry.

"I'll give her your regards," I said.

"Duck when you do."

A small stream cut a weaving boundary between the two estates. I remembered that it served as a gutter, carrying the plantation refuse out to the Straits of Malacca, and provided Silver Jubilee with its resident population of mosquitoes. I saw the log bridge ahead and told the driver to stop.

"I'll walk the rest of the way," I said. "Thanks for the ride."

"Staying long, Jack?"

"That depends."

"On Monique?"

"Let go of it, baby. I'm not interested."

"I feel very cruel at the moment."

"Are you going to do anything about the attempt on your life?"

"I sent a wire to friends in Singapore, asking them to hire a private detective to investigate Edgett and Hoven. I also made up my mind not to brood about them, although I do feel as if I'd almost been run over by an automobile."

"What about the ex-planter who wanted to marry you?"

"Tom Bayfield? I can't make myself believe he has anything to do with it."

"I hope your detective gets on the ball."

"Meanwhile I'll wear a gun and shoot at trespassers."

"Does that include me?"

"I don't know. Cross over, and if I don't drop you—keep coming."

We left it at that and the sedan, looking Martian in its preposterous steel jacket, took off in a cloud of red laterite dust.

I began to walk, keeping to the road until I found a spot in the barbed wire fencing that I could get through. The way would be shorter through the trees and I'd be out of the direct sun.

I thought of a lot of things as I kicked along, my canvas shoes soaking in the dust. I thought of the crazy way I'd met Kay on the ship, and then I wondered about those acid stains she'd first noticed on my cigarette lighter. At first it had puzzled me, then seemed too trivial to care about, but now I was bothered. If it wasn't the same lighter Eden had given me—where the hell had I picked it up?

Finally I could see Gabb's house. It stood on a hilltop overlooking the entire plantation, a peaked house with a wide veranda and long windows open for any stray breeze. With the sun overhead, the shades had been drawn up.

My shirt was sticking to my back when I reached the veranda. There was a faint tinkle from decorated glass wind bells hung at the corners. I knocked. I could hear no sounds from within the house, but after a moment the door opened and a houseboy I didn't recognize stared out at me with sullen, speckled eyes.

"Is the master home?" I asked.

"No, tuan."

"Tell the *mem* there is a caller."

"The *mem* is not here, tuan."

There was an air of insolence about him and it brought out the surly part of my nature. "Do you know how to fix a stengah?"

He nodded. "Yes, tuan."

"I'll wait inside," I said. "With a stengah."

HE began to protest, but I pushed past him. The marble floor, quarried in Ipoh and brought down the coast in lighters, gave the living room an atmosphere of pleasant coolness and two electric punkahs swirled from the high ceiling. It was familiar, and yet everything was different. The fine old teak furniture was gone; the room now looked western and commonplace, like something copied from a glossy American magazine. There was even a chaise longue, but at least it was upholstered in batik.

The houseboy moved off grudgingly and I lit a cigarette. I walked from window to window looking at the rubber foliage stretching in every direction, like vistas of green clouds. I got through part of the cigarette and the houseboy came with my drink on an ornate *jadam* tray. At least that was the same, I thought, taking the glass.

"When do you expect the master back?" I asked.

"He left no message."

"Is he somewhere on the estate?"

He nodded faintly. "The bandits came last night to the Number Three *kaboon*. There were many trees killed. He is there."

I frowned and took a swallow of the drink. Terrorist trouble again. I was glad I had come. Gabb ought to be able to use me. I could earn my keep.

Chapter Ten

AN ARMORED Chrysler came flashing up the road and turned into the shade of the garage. A moment later I saw a figure in knee-length drill shorts and a Port Dickson hat stride with rattling steps past the veranda windows. I heard Gabb burst into the room behind me.

"Mahmood!"

The houseboy appeared even before the echo returned from the corners of the room.

"Mahmood, I'm hollow! Get—"

And then Gabb must have noticed me leaning back in my chair, feet on the window sill, a glass and cigarette in my fingers. I turned and got up grinning.

"Jock!" Gabb exploded. "You son of a thousand prodigal Scots—what are you doing here?"

"Drinking your whisky."

"We'll get drunk as County Cork!" He followed his booming voice across the room and we pummelled each other like a pair of kids. "Had your shower? Tiffin? You look like hell, but it's good to see you. Mahmood! None of your bloody curry for tiffin! I want a feast on the table in half an hour. Jock, did you bring fresh clothes? No? I've got two dozen suits—pick what you want. Then come along."

"Mahmood said you had bandits last night."

"Twenty-eight trees slashed. It could have been worse. Thirty-five-year olds."

I followed him through the house and we went on talking in the shower pavilion. It was always a little hard to keep Gabb in focus; I had set off the exuberant Irishman in him and only if you looked closely would you recognize the Chinese outcroppings in his white face. His eyes were set with only a shadow of the orient, but enough to give his handsome features a faintly exotic cast. Only the cheekbones really betrayed him, but he was always in motion, as if to keep you from looking too closely, and he never allowed his face to brown in the sun.

Yet I knew he took a fierce pride in his Chinese blood and never set foot in the Planter's Club for fear

some pukka sahib might get under his Eurasian skin. He liked to talk about his father, a herb doctor who had won a Queen's Scholarship and returned to Singapore to practice medicine western style. I had never heard him mention his mother, except that she had been Irish. I had always suspected he despised her, but at the same time she had given him his white skin, his towering build and his blue eyes. Gabb had been graduated from the King Edward VII College of Medicine, but with the degree in his pocket he'd gotten himself a common clerk's job on a rubber plantation in Pahang, where I'd originally met him. He'd never practiced. He considered his medical degree a great Irish joke.

"You must meet Monique!" he burst out while I was soaping myself. "You'll see why I waited so long to get myself a *poombalie*, Jock!"

"Why didn't you write that you'd gotten married?"

"But I did!"

"Like hell. Why the big secret?"

"What?"

"Not a word out of you."

"I wrote." His voice was brisk and sure. Then he laughed. "Maybe you don't read your mail!"

I was startled. "Sure," I said, trying to think it through. "Maybe that's it."

Maybe I hadn't read my mail. Had Eden destroyed some of his letters? But that didn't make sense. There was no reason to do that.

"Jock, it's good to have you with me!" He was off again, like an old drinking partner. "You know I'm sorry I had to cut you when you phoned from Singapore. It killed me to do that."

"It damned near killed me."

"My line's been tapped."

"What?"

"Tapped—I knew we were being overheard—I figured you didn't want that."

I was toweling myself and it stopped me. He must know about the trouble in Sumatra, I thought quickly. He must know about Eden. But in his own way he was telling me I didn't have to talk about it if I didn't want to. We could let the subject drop, but he had to warn me about the phone.

I decided not to let the subject drop. "Tell me more."

"A police sergeant from Kuala Lumpur paid us a visit Tuesday." He burst into a laugh. "It seems the police figured you might head for Silver Jubilee."

"Crazy," I said.

"Absurd. I told him that."

"What did he tell you?"

"A bloody fable about you and Eden!"

"It was true, Gabb."

His voice dropped the exclamation points. "She's dead, eh?"

"Yes."

"I'm sorry, Jock."

"Don't be sorry, Gabb. She was rotten."

He shrugged. "They're all rotten—some more than others. But I know you like a brother, Jock. You didn't murder Eden. Even if you say so, I won't believe it!"

"I'm not sure."

"What, man?"

"It's mixed up. I keep telling myself I didn't do it, because I don't think murder is in me—drunk or not. But the truth is I'm not positive."

"Of course you didn't do it!"

"Listen, Gabb. We had a drink after dinner. Eden was wearing shorts around the house—I remember that. She was nervous, but you know how high strung she got at times. It was nothing. We didn't have a fight."

"She wasn't made for plantation life. Not Eden."

"You warned me a long time ago."

He shrugged it off with a smile. "Will a hill crumble at the bark of a dog? You had to find it out for yourself."

"Let's skip the wisdom of the East. There are about thirteen hours I can't find in my head. I don't sleep late, but the next morning I did—I still can't figure it. When I finally woke up I saw Eden in a pink dinner dress. And she was dead. Maybe I got drunk and maybe we had a fight and maybe I killed her."

"Blarney!"

SURE, we used to have some awful rows. I might have really lost my head. But I don't remember getting drunk and I can't figure out why she got all dressed up."

"The important thing, my friend, is to make up your mind what you're going to do."

"I have. I'm going to forget it."

"That I don't believe!"

"Why not? In six months or so it'll blow over. I'm not going to fight it. She wasn't worth the trouble. She's dead, that can't be helped now, and I really don't give a damn."

His eyes narrowed, but there was still something left of the smile on his lips. "May this old friend be permitted another bloody bit of wisdom? The Malays like to say that the mouse-deer may forget the snare, Jock, but the snare doesn't forget the mouse-deer. *Pelandok lupakan jerat, tetapi jerat tiada lupakan pelandok.*"

"Blarney," I grinned.

"You must clear yourself!" Gabb exploded. "It's the only way for an honest man to live with himself."

"Sure, and say I find out I did kill her. What does an honest man do then?"

"Then" he laughed, "it is time to run." . . .

I got into white shorts and a clean shirt that Mahmood had left in the shower pavilion for me, and put my feet in wooden *trompoks*.

"It's not worth the gamble," I said. "There's an inspector down there with ideas of his own. His name is Aziz ben Kris and this is his first important murder and he isn't going to let it get away. His off-the-cuff reconstruction of the crime is so good it almost convinced me."

"Bahl!"

"Eden was sleeping around, including my head *mandor*. I got jealous. I shot her. I suppose it does make sense."

"See—it doesn't even convince me. Jock, someone murdered your wife. Perhaps even the *mandor*, eh? Maybe, yes, she was rotten. But you must catch this murderer."

"I'm just not that interested."

"You're a fool. Do you think it's safe for you here?"

Our eyes met. "As safe as anywhere," I said.

"No," he muttered grimly. "The police found a letter I had written to you."

"That's impossible—I burned up everything that might start the police pestering my friends."

"This letter you didn't burn. In it I told you the estate was getting too big for me to handle and I wished

you'd give up your few acres in Sumatra and join me. From this letter the police arrived at the opinion you might show up at Silver Jubilee, eh?"

I stared at him, and it made a kind of sense. If Eden had held out one of Gabb's letters, that might be the letter the police had found and I had missed burning. But why would Eden care about any of Gabb's letters? It bothered me.

"So," Gabb went on, "they came from Kuala Lumpur to talk to me and they tapped the wire in case you attempted to get in touch with me."

"Which I did."

"You can stop worrying about the phone." He laughed. "It is now out of order—I had my clearing gang fix that, eh? When the company finds the trouble it will look like a wah-wah chewed the insulation. Perhaps it will take them another day to find it. But you see, the police were right. You came to Silver Jubilee. It is not safe for you here."

"Does that mean you don't want me here?"

His hands shot up in exasperation. "I tell you only what I think, Jock. I expect you to make up your own mind." His temper cooled. "Meanwhile, my house is yours."

"Let's eat."

"A feast! Perhaps Monique is home now to join us. You must see her—an angel, Jock! Ah, my life has become sweet. See how she has

changed the house? It's a showplace now, eh? This morning she went to visit at the Straits View Plantation. You remember Mrs. McWortor? No? And as Scotch as yourself! Down with fever again and Monique is helping to care for her."

"Monique—" I stopped myself, and the wooden pattens on my feet made clacking sounds along the floor. Why tell him, I thought? Monique had gone to the Planter's Club bar this morning. Hell, maybe I was jumping to conclusions. Maybe Mrs. McWortor needed a drink.

"Monique," I said, "is a pretty name."

Gabb put my passport in his bedroom safe. For the benefit of Monique, the houseboys and anyone else in Kuala Tang, my name was to be Jack Gordon—we took the name off a gin bottle. As long as I was determined to stay, Gabb was determined to make Silver Jubilee as safe as possible for me.

Monique didn't show up for lunch.

If Gabb was piqued he kept it hidden behind a rapid flow of reminiscence. Between the roast squab and the *sambals* of rice and dried prawns, the bottle of imported sherry and Gabb's rushing voice I had little time to sort out my thoughts.

"Your neighbor across the river gave me a lift in from Kuala Tang," I said.

"What neighbor?"

"Kay Allison."

He was refilling my glass, and the ruby flow of sherry vanished. "You met her in Kuala Tang?"

"I came up from Singapore on the boat with her."

"Did she tell you anything about me?"

"Everything."

His voice had an unfamiliar doubt in it. "Like what, Jock?"

"The name," I said, "is Jack."

He finished filling my glass and chuckled. "I'll try to remember. What did she say?"

"That she was only a platonic friend of yours, despite the gossip."

"Ah, that is Monique for you! One look at the Australian and she figures things out, eh? It's too bad. Kay needs help since her husband was killed, but me, ah, Monique is too jealous even to let me step foot on Jade Tiger. She is having bandit trouble, too, over there."

"I saw it in the paper."

"A year ago we thought we had them cleared out of the jungle, but now they are back again, like the fever."

"Someone tried to kill Kay aboard ship."

"It will never end, until—what?"

"A couple of hired killers."

"You're joking!"

"I'm not joking."



"But who—"

"She doesn't know."

Gabb had stopped eating. The news alarmed him and a harsh frown set on his pale face. "This is a new trick! Are the Reds out to get us personally—not just the trees?"

"That might be it."

"Did she bring back a new overseer? Ah, that's what she must have! Two bloody fists to run the kaboon and deal quickly with trouble."

I told him the rest of it, Edgett and Hoven and the reason she hadn't been able to bring back an overseer. He listened carefully, without interrupting, like a doctor being told symptoms that might suggest a cure.

"I must do something to help her," he said, when I had finished. "She is alone out here and it has worried me for a year. It is ridiculous for a woman to run a rubber kaboon."

"I keep asking myself why she doesn't sell and get out," I said.

"Why?" He was off again. "Why do any of us stick, Jack? It is bad enough with the terrorists, but rubber has fallen three-and-three-quarters cents just this week. A few planters have pulled out, but the stubborn ones stick. We are fools! You remember the herd of elephants that trampled my saplings the last time you were at Silver Jubilee?"

"They still giving you trouble?"

"Still. We are like the elephants. We remain, like idiots. See, we have cut back the jungle to plant rubber, driving the herd back and back, yes? But will they go away? A few, perhaps, the timid ones. But this land they liked, and they keep returning to break our fences and damage our trees. We want the land too, and not even the Reds will drive me away."

"That answers that," I said. "Kay is anything but timid."

GABB emptied his glass in thirsty gulps. "With her there is more," he said, recklessly slapping down the glass. "There is crazy pride. Her family in Sydney is rich—any day you can see them in the society pages down there. They warned her she was a fool to live here on the edge of the jungle. They were against the marriage. You never met Eric? A fine man, he was, and a good planter. She loved him, but two months after he brought her home to Jade Tiger he was dead. No, Kay will never go back. She must prove to her family she was right. And she has come to love the land now that her husband is dead. She is a rare one, Jack. Rare."

I nodded.

"Come," Gabb said, getting up from the table. "It's too hot to discuss these things. We'll have a siesta, eh? And later you will meet Monique."

Later, I thought, I'd go over to Jade Tiger. I felt an overwhelming need to talk to Kay. I was sorry the phone was out of order—if trouble cropped up she wouldn't be able to reach me. I felt as if I ought to check on her every half-hour, and then I shrugged off my fears with a private grin. I was forgetting. Kay was pretty good at looking out for herself.

"That's what I need," I said. "Sleep."

Chapter Eleven

I AWOKE SLOWLY and something was wrong. I opened my eyes and the room was dark. That was crazy. What had happened to the sun? Then I realized someone was in the room. Mahmood.

"The *mem* wishes to know if you are awake," he said.

I rubbed the sweat off my face. "Have you ever heard of knocking?"

"She waits on the veranda for you."

"What time is it?"

"Almost nine, tuan."

"Clear out," I said. "Tell the *mem* I'll be there in a few minutes."

The houseboy left and I sat on the edge of the bed with a cigarette. Mahmood gave me the creeps. I'd tanked up on sleep and now my head felt fuzzy. My skin was sticky with perspiration. I picked up my clothes, took a short shower and finally showed up on the veranda. Gabb was nowhere in sight.

But Monique was there.

She was waiting in a lounge chair with a drink in her hand and her shoulders bare and glistening in the heat. Insects were singing all over the place. She turned a moody smile on me as I came up.

"You're Gabb's wife," I said. "Hello."

Her eyes were large and dark and they covered me in a web-like glance. The smile brightened a little. "Sit down, M'sieu Jack. I have been waiting to meet you."

"What happened to the sun?"

"I made it go away so you could sleep."

She wore something strapless made out of Javanese batik, full of scarlet and black and full of Monique. Large gold rings caught the light at her ears. Her hair was night-black, combed to one side with a certain careful abandon.

I sat down. She stared at me with unabashed frankness and I began to feel uncomfortable. She was quite beautiful and quite young, but that wasn't what bothered me. There was something aggressively lonely and unhappy about her, and she wore it like a chip on her shoulder.

"You slept through dinner," she

said. "Gabriel refused to wake you. I will have Mahmood bring you some food."

"I'd rather have a drink," I said. "Where's Gabb?"

She tipped her head in a sort of bored gesture. "He sets out guards because the bandits may come again tonight. You are old friends, yes?"

"Yes."

"I'm glad you are here. It becomes lonely."

"I suppose it does."

"We have no visitors except the bandits. You will stay long?"

Everyone seemed to be feeling me out on that. "I don't know," I said.

"But you must stay!" she said with sudden brightness.

I looked at her. She really meant it and I grinned to myself. "You're talking me into it."

"You are from Singapore, M'sieu Jack?"

"Not exactly."

Mahmood appeared with a tray of drinks, as if he were a mind reader, and I began to wonder about Kay. I cursed the telephone. Maybe I'd take a run over when Gabb got back with his car.

When I turned my head, Monique was still staring at me. I got a quick impression that startled me. I was something new at the plantation, a stranger, and it was as if her emotions had been waiting, leech-like, for something to pass. I'd better watch my step.

"I was a dancer," she said. "Did Gabriel tell you about me, M'sieu Jack?"

"You must dance for me sometime," I said absently. I crossed my ankles and glanced out over the rolling night mass of trees stretching like a ground fog to the Straits.

"I'm very good," Monique said simply, as if there was no room for argument. "I have—what you call it—imagination, yes? But Gabriel doesn't like to watch me dance. He doesn't understand—you know?"

SHE was running him down, and I didn't like to hear it. Gabb must have been mad to bring a dancer to live with him at Silver Jubilee. I wished he'd hurry back.

"I have performed many places," Monique said with a touch of naïve arrogance. "I started in Saigon. You have been to Saigon?"

"Yes."

"I was born there. My mother too was a dancer. It must be in the blood, to be a good dancer."

"You must dance for me sometime," I said, before I realized I was repeating myself. I kept listening for the sound of Gabb's Chrysler on the road. It would soon be too late to go to Jade Tiger, and suddenly I wanted

very much to see Kay. Monique was unloading her life story, as if it was the only thing she had of her own on this sprawling estate, and I wasn't really very interested.

"My mother was killed when they threw a bomb into a cafe where I was dancing," she said softly. "The Viet Minh. Such murderers! Like here. They are all the same, the Reds. *Cochons!* They kill without reason. I was only sixteen when it happened."

"I'm sorry."

"Then I find out all about the world. It is hard for a girl of sixteen, eh?"

I could do without the self-pity. I just nodded.

She faced me sharply. "You have heard the gossip about me?"

"No," I said.

"You will. None of it is true."

"I'll remember that."

"They despise me in Kuala Tang. The women. Because I was a dancer, not like them, mere housewives, eh? But I'm boring you, M'sieu Jack."

"Not at all," I said distractedly. I thought I heard the distant whine of tires. I put out my cigarette and walked to the railing.

"It is a beautiful plantation, even at night, yes?" she said with a flash of pride. It was hers. Not bad for a girl who had found out about the world at sixteen, eh?

"Quite beautiful."

She was the *mem* of a big estate, and she should have been happy, but she was a dancer and an *artiste* needed an audience and applause and adoration. She was caught, and I found myself beginning to feel sorry for her.

Headlights vanished and reappeared like a will-o'-the-wisp through the trees. That would be Gabb. I could feel Monique's eyes measuring my shoulders.

"Come, sit down," she said. "In a moment I must share you with Gabriel."

THE car grated up the hill and swung along the driveway. In the searchlights that lit up the grounds as an anti-bandit precaution, I saw at once it wasn't Gabb. The sedan braked below us and a Malay flew out of the door. It was Kay's Mercury, and my vague fears turned into a quick sweat.

The Malay stopped mid-way up the steps when he saw me on the veranda.

"The *mem* says you come quick! There is bad trouble!"

Monique hardly let him finish before she was on her feet. "Tell *mem*," she said icily, "her troubles do not interest us at Silver Jubilee. Tell—"

"Let's go," I told the Malay.

"M'sieu Jack—"

I shot a glance her way. Monique's face was flushed with rage. She was

suddenly unreal. There were cruelty and jealousy and danger in her eyes. I wondered how I had thought her beautiful a moment ago.

Chapter Twelve

IT WAS A WILD ride and my thoughts raced ahead of us. The Malay bore down on the accelerator with his naked foot and I didn't slow him up by asking questions. He assured me Kay was alive and that's all I cared about. I wondered bitterly if the Nabob had gotten in another try. At the same time, my pride quickened. Something had happened at Jade Tiger and she'd sent for me. Me.

We wound up through the groves of Jade Tiger and after another moment I could see the house in the searchlights. Maybe there was another terrorist raid on the rubber, the Reds. I left the car almost before it stopped and raced up the steps to the veranda. The door opened and I saw Kay in a quick silhouette against the bright living room.

"Kay baby—you're okay?"

I held her tightly in the doorway. Her body was tense, but I could feel a tide of relief go through her.

"I'm okay—I tried to phone."

"It's out."

"Jack, it's terrible! I—"

"Come on, baby, get a grip on yourself." I led her into the living room and really saw her for the first time. She wore a short housecoat and her legs were in silk pajamas. She had obviously already gone to bed. Now she wore a gun belt and the holster had a gun in it. She was keyed up and I realized I'd never seen her that way before. Even on the ship her fright had never quite crystallized. It had never appeared in her green eyes. Now it was there.

"What happened?"

She put a cigarette between her lips; I took the lighter out of her fingers and lit it for her.

"I tried to phone the constabulary in Kuala Tang. They were asleep—it was maddening. And when I tried to call you at Silver Jubilee—"

"I know."

"I'm terribly relieved that you're here."

"The Reds again?"

"I don't know." She exhaled smoke in a harsh pause. "When I got home this afternoon one of my field conductors reported that Ahmad was missing from the estate."

"Ahmad?"

"The *mandor* of the Malay workers. He grew up on this estate, Jack. He could handle any job from timber clearing to tapping and he did it with a marvelous smile. I could trust him

and I did. Ahmad was the closest thing to an overseer I had."

"Sure, a good *mandor* is hard to find."

"It wasn't like him to leave the kaboondi while I was away. He's been gone two days."

"Hell, maybe he's found a girl on one of the other plantations."

"I was hoping it would be as simple as that—"

A houseboy came into the room with a pot of tea and some native sweetmeats. He wore a smile too, and I thought suddenly of Mahmood and his faintly contemptuous, speckled eyes.

"You must drink, *mem*," he said softly. "It is not good for *mem* to smoke so much. Bad for the nerves. Tea is better."

"Take it back, Dollah," Kay said without, somehow, sounding unkind. "I couldn't."

"I leave, you drink, yes."

Dollah left, his smile firm and boyishly commanding. She would drink, yes. I poured out a cup and made her take it. She finally sat down.

"THEN Ahmad didn't go off to some *poombalie* on another plantation," I said.

"Dollah found him, Jack. I have some mango trees growing behind the hospital house and Dollah decided I wanted some fresh fruit before I went to bed. He went out to pick a few mangos and he found Ahmad. There was a knife in his back—he must have been trying to crawl to the hospital. He's dead!"

"Is he still out there in the trees?"

She nodded. "Jack, what's happening here. I can feel it—there's something—something horrible and secret."

"Dollah!" I called. I turned back to Kay. "Don't try to call the police again."

"What?"

Would I never get off this tight-rope? I didn't want cops getting that close to me. They might not find Ahmad's killer, but they'd sure find me. I think I realized at that moment that I was a fool for hanging around Kuala Tang. I ought to clear out. If only I could manage a couple of days to get back on my feet before I began running again. But the thought of running had a sharper cutting edge than before. I would be running away from Kay and I wasn't sure I could do it. Without an overseer and with her *mandor* dead she had to have help. She needed two big fists on her plantation—Gabb had said that—and I had two big fists.

"Promise me, baby." I almost shouted it. "Don't call the police."

Her green eyes steadied on me. "Jack, sometimes you frighten me."

"I know these small town cops," I snapped. "A murder comes along and they turn into hot-weather *ührers*. Who else knows about Ahmad?"

"My Number Two boy."

"The driver?"

"Yes."

"Can he keep his mouth shut?"

"If I ask him."

"Tell him. If anyone asks, Ahmad hasn't returned to the estate."

"What are you going to do, Jack?"

"I don't know. But I don't want the cops—not yet."

She put out her cigarette. Maybe I frightened her a little, but she trusted me. "All right, Jack."

"And keep that gun on your hip."

DOLLAH appeared from the kitchen and I told him to get a flashlight. I followed him through the house to the back door and it came to me in a rush that murder had begun to cling to me like so many leeches. Eden and the attempt on Kay's life and now her *mandor!* For more than thirty years I had never been closer to murder than the newspapers, but suddenly everything I touched seemed bloody. Strange.

I followed Dollah through the foliage and in another moment he spread some leafy mango branches and the flashlight stopped weaving.

It glinted off the kris handle that rose like a marker out of Ahmad's young back. A monitor lizard as long as my arm scurried out of the light. A praying mantis was startled from the white-streaked body and vanished in a green flutter. I bent down and saw streams of white ants ignoring the flesh and feeding at Ahmad's sandals, his belt, and cheap watch band. The mantis had been lured by the ants, the lizard by the mantis. Death was always a nightmare in the jungle.

I looked up at Dollah. "We'll have to bury him. Can you get a shovel?"

"Yes, tuan."

He let me have the flashlight and hurried off to the nursery shed. I looked along the stiff form of a man who'd once been able to smile. I could still get the sweet scent of Zam-Zam that plastered down his thick black hair. But the smell of quickly rotting death was beginning to envelope even that. He couldn't have been dead too long, I figured. A few hours in the tropics makes a terrible difference, and I wondered how many tortured hours he'd been creeping toward the hospital. Perhaps a day of starts and blackouts. He'd probably been knifed far from here.

I barely breathed, hating to take in the odor of death, and fought to keep my stomach from retching. I stared at the kris handle. There was no chance for fingerprints and that, I

thought, made it a smart murder tool. It was carved as a stylized bird with a long beak and there wasn't enough uncut surface to leave any hope of prints. The carving was rough; the kris looked cheap and commonplace. But once Ahmad was buried there'd be nothing else to go on, and I set about withdrawing it.

It came more easily than it should have. When I looked at the blade in the beam of the flashlight—I saw why. My mind started spinning. Most kris have wavy, snake-like blades. This was as straight as a kitchen knife.

I wiped the blood off on some leaves and looked again at the handle. The bird's head plus the straight blade made it not so common, at least in the state of Selangor. This kris came from some other part of Malay.

Dollah came back with the shovel and we picked a small clearing under a casuarina tree. It took only half-an-hour to get the job done in the soft, rust-colored soil.

I managed to get the kris cleaned up before I brought it into the house. Kay had herself pretty well under control and I showed her the murder weapon.

She looked away.

"I want you to look at it," I said. "You've been around these things. Have you ever seen a kris like this?"

"Jack, knives are as common as sarongs."

"But even sarongs are different, depending on where the batik is made."

She made herself look at it. "I think that's supposed to be a king-fisher's head," she said.

"What about the blade?"

"I've seen straight ones before."

"You don't know where it might have come from?"

"No—what difference does it make? If the Reds killed Ahmad it won't do any good to trace the knife."

"I don't think it was the Reds. They don't leave a man in his clothes and especially they don't leave a wrist watch. I'm hoping Ahmad's death has no connection to the Nabob and the attempt on your life, but I can't shake the feeling that the connection is there. Look, baby—"

"I want to call in the police. I must!"

"Damn it—give me a couple of days. Two days. Someone is trying hard to keep your kaboon from operating and I'd like to find out why. But don't put the police on my back."

"You're afraid of them, aren't you?"

"Two days and maybe I'll be ready for them. Will you do that for me?"

"It was the same on the ship, wasn't it?"

"I'm sorry."

"Why do I go on believing in you? I don't even know your last name."

"It's Gordon."

She shrugged, and I knew she didn't believe the lie. I got a cigarette going.

I said, "Are you afraid of staying alone, baby?"

"I'm not alone. There's my Number One boy and my Number Two boy. No—I'm not afraid."

"Well, maybe I am," I said. I called Dollah back from the kitchen and told him to roll a couple of field conductors out of their beds. They would spend the night on the front and rear verandas. I'd feel better.

"Kay, baby, you've got to think why someone wants to kill you. There's got to be a reason, and it must be staring you in the face. Ahmad may have found out something while you were gone and that might be why he was killed, so he couldn't talk. Until something better comes along, I'd like to think that's the connection."

"Would Monique want to kill me and bankrupt the estate?"

"I'll ask her."

"She's quite cunning. It would be like her to go about it very darkly."

"Keep thinking," I said. "Go back over the last few years of your life. That Chinese you fired because he left empty bottles around. Bayfield—there's got to be something behind you that's making all the trouble."

"Are you going now?"

"It's late and you must be dog tired. Put the kris somewhere. I'm not going to tell Gabb about this. He'd only get excited and rush over and Monique would take off his skin."

She rose from the webbed rattan chair and gave me a hard smile. "If you know where I can hire a good overseer, let me know."

"I'll let you know."

"Good night, *Tuan Besar*."

I checked the verandas and the Sikhs were there with their curled beards, their chesty bodies and their rifles.

Kay would be safe.

Chapter Thirteen

I DON'T KNOW what time it was when I got back to Silver Jubilee. Despite the searchlights, the house seemed heavily asleep. There was only a nightjar awake to greet me on the veranda, with a tocking in its throat, like a cheap alarm clock running down. Time—that was all I wanted. A couple of days. Time enough to find out what was going on and make sure Kay would be safe when I pulled out. I had a crazy kris to go on, and that was a start.

Mahmood had been left waiting up for me. He let me in.

"The *Tuan Besar* has gone to bed?" I asked.

"There is early work to be done,"

Mahmood said, as if to acquaint me with the facts of estate life. "The *Tuan Besar* sleeps now."

"Wake me at five-thirty," I said. "Tell the *Tuan Besar* I want to make the morning rounds with him."

"Yes, tuan."

It puzzled me that Gabb hadn't waited up to find out what the trouble had been at Kay's. Then I realized Monique may never have told him there was any trouble at all. "M'sieu Jack? He is at Jade Tiger." Period. End of report.

I WENT out to the pavilion, took a long shower, and got back into my clothes. Then I walked to my room, smoked a last cigarette as I undressed again, and went to bed.

I threw an arm over the Dutch wife and made myself go to sleep....

Then suddenly I was awake again. It was Monique.

She stood beyond the netting and her voice was soft and throaty. "You are awake, M'sieu Jack?"

"I am now," I said.

"I have been waiting for you to come back."

She wore a shy smile, but she looked weird as hell. The brooding loneliness was gone from her wide, brown eyes. Even through the netting, and in the weak light, her skin glistened, and I realized she had rubbed it with coconut oil—like a Tamil woman. She wore a filmy lavender sari, she was barefooted, there were brass bells at her ankles and small cymbals on her fingers.

"You wanted to see me dance," she smiled, and there was a flush of intrigue in her smile. "I dance."

"Maybe you'd better go back to bed."

"He sleeps like a bear," she said firmly. "And I touch the cymbals very light, yes? *Oui*, like this."

The cymbals struck and shimmered softly in the room.

I managed to keep my voice low. "Get out."

She laughed softly. She entwined her arms, like two glistening snakes, and the finger cymbals beat faintly again, and again, and then she began to dance.

I stared through the netting and wanted to feel sorry for her, but I couldn't any more. She was getting a charge out of the danger of being in my bedroom. I watched the excitement grow on her face; she was in her element now. She was dancing and she had an audience, but the sight of her and the smell of her was beginning to disgust me. I pulled aside the mosquito netting stood on my bare feet.

"I'll tell you again," I said through the brass jangle. "Clear out."

She began to hum as she danced,

coming closer, a malevolent blackness in her eyes. She stopped in front of me and entwined her oily arms around my neck and crashed in my ears like something mad. The heavy smell of oil was making me sick. "Get out."

I picked her up under the knees and carried her across the floor. She beat at my face and the ankle bells jangled. I dumped her on her feet in the hall.

"Good night, baby."

I put the door between us and locked it. I stood there a moment, and I was shaking a little. This was the girl Gabb had married. The girl from Lavender Street. Lonely and mixed up and starved for excitement.

I lit a cigarette and sat on the edge of the bed and wondered if I ought to spend another night at Silver Jubilee. She'd try again; I knew her type and I knew she wouldn't leave me alone. I didn't want to sleep with Gabb's wife. The poor guy, he must be blind. She was Eden in coconut oil.

It took me a long time to fall back to sleep.

Chapter Fourteen

THERE WAS ONLY A webb of light in the eastern sky when we left the bungalow. Gabb wore riding breeches and puttees and his Port Dickson hat. I remembered he was generally silent and morose for the first dark hour of the morning and we did little more than trade nods. Hell, I didn't feel like talking myself. You don't tell your best friend his wife tried to crawl into bed with you. I had a strong suspicion that Gabb could be a very jealous man, whether he had a reason or not.

I followed him to the Chrysler in the garage and I saw Monique's car, an armored Ford with white-wall tires. We drove to the native lines along the river. The cook fires were already going and in the pre-dawn they created twisting shadows in the *kampong*. The Malays were always harder to get out of bed than the Tamils and the Chinese, and we started at the Malay longhouses.

By the time we reached the Chinese workers the trees had picked up the dawn and heavy dew began to drip from the leaves. Gabb's mood brightened and he joked with the *kapela*, the headman of the Chinese contract workers. For those few minutes he was a Chinese and I stood by feeling strangely a world apart from him.

I guessed Kay was out in the lines across the river. A fine job for a woman—why hadn't I gone over and gotten the day's work started for her? It was bad enough without an overseer, but now even her *mandor* wasn't on tap any more.

The human machinery of the plantation spread out from the lines, the timber clearing gang, the *lalang* diggers, the pest and disease control workers, the army of tappers. By time the sun had detached itself from the fringed horizon the native lines were as deserted as a ghost town.

It was a big estate and we buzzed around in the armored car checking the work in progress. It had doubled in size since the last time I'd seen it the year before Eden and I had gotten married. Gabb had recently bought up a new piece of land, a small run-down *kaboon* nestled up against the jungle, and the once cleared acres were shoulder deep in *talang* grass.

"I'll have it back in shape in a month," Gabb said, tugging at the brim of his hat. "If the bloody terrorists give me half a chance."

"Any trouble last night?"

"Nothing that's been reported yet. We might get the army planes to blast them out of the jungle."

"There's a lot of jungle back there to blast."

He whipped his cane through the grass. "A Chinese owned this *kaboon*—the Reds scared him out. Unless we can get the terrorists out of the jungle, I'm not going to have any neighbors!"

Where we couldn't drive we walked. The sky was a fresh blue and the sun was clear and sharp. We walked through the deep shade of the rubber, some of the trees at least ninety feet high. You'd catch a spot of color among the trunks, the bright sarong of a tapper as he bent to re-cut yesterday's wounds and fix the cup for the latex. Gabb kept a brisk pace on foot, and I remembered my own mornings among my own trees in Sumatra. I felt thoroughly alive and for a little while I felt almost happy. It gave me a lift to watch an experienced tapper at his *kanack*, his assignment of trees, caring for them like pet cows. I was in my element. I was glad I had come along.

In another hour it began to get hot.

"Gabb," I said. "When's the last time you saw a straight-bladed kris?"

"A week ago—there's a tree getting the bloody pinks."

He left me standing and found the nearest tapper, pointed out the diseased tree and chewed him out for failing to get the P & D gang on it.

A week ago. Maybe this wasn't going to be hopeless. Gabb returned and we began walking again.

"Where, a week ago?"

He turned and laughed. "You want to start wearing a knife, do you? I can let you have a gun if you're that worried."

"Where did you see it?"

"The kris?"

"A straight-bladed kris with a kingfisher's head."

He stopped to wipe the sweat off his forehead and fixed the straw hat at a sharper angle. "I've seen a dozen of them and so have you. *Kris pekaka*—kingfisher kris. They carry them around Patani. Come along Jack!"

Patani—the east coast. That gave me something to go on. You can generally spot an east coast Malay as easily as any other stranger to the Malacca coast. His features lack the fine cut of the Malacca Malay. The east coaster is generally flat-nosed and he carries around a little more jowl.

Well, maybe I had something and maybe I didn't.

We walked back to the road and piled into the car. It must have been almost nine o'clock. Gabb headed back toward the house for a shower and breakfast.

"Do you know of any Patani Malays around here?" I asked.

"You want to buy a kingfisher kris, Jack?"

"Yes," I lied.

"Ask Kay. I remember there's a family from Patani in her lines. Hungry?"

"Starved."

"You broke your arm, you know."

"What are you talking about?"

"I've got to take you to the hospital."

"Maybe you'd better start over. I don't follow you."

He laughed and gave me a wise look. "Maybe you were too busy to listen to the radio last night. You were on it, old friend of mine."

"Radio Malaya?"

"The news. We're going to cover up that scar on your thumb. I'm thinking I'd better put your entire arm in a cast, just to make it look good. It might be too obvious if I merely taped your hand, eh? Hal—if you had your way there'd be radios in the lines. One look at your thumb and all the natives would have recognized you!"

Chapter Fifteen

I SHAVED AND ATE my breakfast with one hand. I resented the plaster cast the moment it began to dry. It was hot and heavy even in the batik sling, and it slowed up my movements. But at least I could stop worrying about the scar on my thumb. That was the give-away. The scar. Once I left Kuala Tang it would be a lot safer traveling in the cast. I decided I'd better get used to it. But Gabb had put enough plaster on my arm to balast a fishing *prau*.

I didn't want to think about where I would go or when. A couple of days one way or the other couldn't

matter and I wanted that much time to follow up the kingfisher kris.

Monique came to breakfast in a tight print dress and a dozen wire bracelets on her slim wrists. Her dark eyes were wide and cheerful, and you'd never guess I'd thrown her out of my bedroom last night.

"M'sieu Jack—your arm!"

"Nothing," I said. "Just a scratch."

"*Mon Dieu*, I don't understand—"

Gabb cut in with his big voice and laid it on thick. "M'sieu Jack has bone trouble. He should have been wearing a cast for months. Ah!—the doctors in Singapore—what do they know? Me, I will fix him up." He thumped his chest. "Did I never tell you I am a doctor?"

"You joke."

"It's a joke, but it's also true."

"M'sieu Jack—"

"Eat your breakfast, eh, Monique?"

There was a faint warning in Gabb's voice, and she detected it. The subject lingered for a moment and finally disappeared.

"When will the telephone be fixed?"

Monique complained. "We might all be murdered in our beds by the guerrillas and there'd be no way to call for help."

"Today, maybe they will repair it."

Gabb passed me a look as if to say—*don't worry, my friend. Once they*

find the spot and repair it, another monkey will chew another spot and it will be out of order again. See, I take good care of my guest.

"I hope it stays fixed," I answered firmly. It would make keeping in touch with Kay a lot easier. "It's rotten for you to be without a phone."

Gabb shrugged with a grin. "That is the trouble with these modern toys, eh? You come to depend on them and they let you down. Women are that way, eh, Jack?"

I glanced up sharply, wondering how he meant me to take it, when Monique cut in.

"You slept well last night, M'sieu Jack?"

"I slept fine," I said, stirring my coffee. Had Gabb noticed something? Despite Monique's airily cheerfulness it seemed to me she was jockeying for position. Suddenly I wished I'd never set foot on Silver Jubilee.

"I'm glad you slept well, M'sieu Jack."

Gabb began talking about rubber prices and Monique allowed herself to be cut off. I thought about Kay. She had been too upset last night to listen to her radio. What would she think if she found out I was wanted for murder? She already had a strong sense of awareness. She knew something was wrong. She knew I was



"George, tell Hal and Helen the one about— Oh, I see you already have!"

running away from something, and Radio Malaya would fill her in if they were still broadcasting items about me. I'd better get over there and put her radio out of order.

"Gabriel," Monique protested, uncapping her lipstick. "M'sieu Jack has no interest in rubber prices, yes? Don't make such boring talk."

Gabb looked at me as if to say—*she is right. We are talking like planters. It is small things like this that can give you away. We must be careful, eh?*

Mahmood moved in with a platter of fresh fruit and I lit a cigarette. Suddenly Monique put her hand on my plaster cast.

"It is so white, M'sieu Jack," she frowned. "One moment! We will write our names, yes? *Oui*, when I was a girl and broke my wrist all my friends wrote their names. I was very proud of my cast, I had so many friends."

I tried to withdraw my arm, but she held tight and began writing with the lipstick. Gabb burst out laughing.

"She is still a school girl, my wife, eh?"

"I—"

"It is a pretty name, Monique," he said, enjoying my discomfort. "Wear it proudly, my friend!"

It was finished within seconds, and the crimson letters stood out large and searing against the white plaster.

"Now, it's your turn, Gabriel," Montique said brightly.

"Me? I'm not a school boy." He got up from the table, his laughing booming in the room. "Now I must check accounts. This afternoon I'm going to K.L. by river and you must take care of my Monique. I have business that can't wait and I apologize. But I will be back tomorrow."

I LOOKED up at him and his news paralyzed me. I didn't want to be left alone with Monique. Was he such a fool that he trusted her. But he trusted me. I was his best friend, wasn't I? Suddenly I wondered if he had his own reason for putting that cast on my arm. It would be hard to make a play for his wife when I was carrying around a ton of plaster. Was that why he'd laid it on like crazy?

There were a few last moments of conversation, but I lost them. What sort of trap had I walked into? If I smeared off Monique's name it would amount to a slap in the face, and Gabb would take offense. I had an impulse to get a hammer and break the cast to bits, but I just sat there. I'd let him put all that plaster on my arm and if it wasn't there when he got back he'd have a good reason to start thinking.

He'd held back the information

that he was going to K.L. Now I couldn't get rid of the cast without arousing his suspicions. *They have trapped you, tuan. Both of them.*

I stared down at the bright red lettering on the thing that was my arm. *Monique*. As if she owned me. What would Kay think if I walked in with that on my arm? Monique had been way ahead of me. Did she think this crazy business would keep me away from Jade Tiger?

"I'm going for a walk," I said angrily.

It took me a long time to leg it to Jade Tiger, and by time I got there the sling was wet around my neck and my arm was numb. I kept glancing down at the humiliating lipstick marks. I'd make Kay understand. Maybe we could make a joke out of it.

I found her in the factory behind the house. The tappers were filing in with their buckets of latex, like milk, and she supervising the weighing and testing and making entries in the log. She looked up smiling. Her gun, in its holster, lay on the accounts table.

"Tabé, Big Master."

Nearby, latex was coagulating in big aluminum vats; the room was hot from the fires and smelled of sulphur. She was dripping sweat, but somehow she looked completely beautiful. "You look busy," I said. "Can I help?"

She saw my arm in the sling. "Jack—what happened to you!"

I couldn't face it here, and I tugged the batik over so that it pretty much covered the lipstick. "Nothing serious," I said. "I broke my leg."

"Jack—"

"Please, baby. It's only a joke. It's coming off tomorrow."

"I don't understand."

"Don't try." I was holding up the routine and leaned against the wall. "Get back to work."

"I'll be finished in another hour."

There was nothing I could do; she had the routine down cold. I watched the tappers carefully as they came in off their *kanacks*, hoping to spot an east coast face. But I found myself watching Kay instead. It was almost one-thirty when the last of the tappers checked in for the day. Tapping is strictly a morning activity, as the real heat of the day slows down the flow of sap.

Finally she lit a cigarette and turned to me. "Tiffin?"

"I'm not hungry."

"Then come watch me eat." She picked up her gun and we started out of the factory.

"That kris comes from around Patani," I said when we were alone. "Gabb recognized it by description. He says you have some people from there working for you."

"Gabriel has a good memory."

"I watched your tappers come in. I didn't see anyone who looked east coast to me."

She was quick to resent the suggestion that one of her own men may have killed Ahmad. "They're not tappers. I'm sure you're wrong about them. They're brothers and very good workers."

"I'd like to talk to them," I said.

"Now?"

"Now."

"They're on fence patrol. We ought to be able to drive quite close."

She told Dollah to hold tiffin and then got the Mercury out of the garage. I got in beside her and managed to keep the brand on my arm out of sight. I kept asking myself why I didn't just wipe it off, and then I'd go over the whole thing again in my mind and I'd come up with the same frustrated feeling. I'd be tampering with Gabb's emotions, and I knew better than to bite the hand that was feeding me.

WE left the car on the road and walked about a quarter of a mile through scented trees to the edge of the estate. The heat was thick and heavy.

"Shall I tell you again?" Kay muttered.

"Go ahead."

"You're making a mistake. The Tulloh boys couldn't have done it. They're happy here. They wouldn't make trouble."

"I didn't say they killed Ahmad."

"But that's what you're thinking."

"All I care about is finding out who's got it in for you."

Half a dozen Malays were repairing the fence and they stopped with little grins as we approached.

"Tabé, mem, tabé, mem . . ."

I spotted the Tulloh brothers easily, stocky men with sweat rolling down their hairless chests. Their expressions were shy and sensitive, as if they felt like outsiders in Selangor. I found myself liking them on sight.

"Elephants broke through here last night, mem," one of them explained in a soft voice, pointing out the broken fencing. "Now we fix good."

I could see trampled saplings in the area, rubber five years along that would take five years to replace. Kay only shrugged, as if she were used to the elephant damage and the terrorist slashings. They had become part of the daily routine of her life. But I wondered how much longer she could hold out.

"Tuan Gordon will ask you a few questions," Kay said, a little stiffly. She was embarrassed, and I was sorry.

But I had a feeling I was striking out even before I got started. Kay knew her men and intuitively she knew the Tulloh boys, one or the

other, wouldn't make trouble for her. Both were carrying common *parangs*. I glanced at the sweat-darkened sheaths and my hopes began to fade. A native boy who owned an ornamented kris would wear it any day over a *parang*, but the sheaths I saw looked as if they'd been soaking up sweat for years.

I said, "How long have you been away from Patani?"

The brother, who appeared older, did the talking. "We have never been in Patani, tuan."

"Were you born there?"

"No, tuan. In Port Swettenham."

"Have you ever seen a *kris pekaka*?"

"Yes, tuan."

"Where?"

"Our father brought one from Patani."

"Where is your father?"

"In the *tokong*, tuan."

In the family shrine. "Where's his kris?"

"It hangs still in the *pajak lelap*." The pawnshop. "Someday we will redeem it, tuan."

Kay gave me a slightly victorious glance, but at least she'd begun to smile again. I went doggedly ahead. Ahmad's murder was one key to the Nabob and the trouble at Jade Tiger—it had to be.

"Do you know anyone else from Patani living around Kuala Tang?" I asked.

"There is Inche, tuan."

"Inche?"

"He has a small *kaboon* near the river. Perhaps five kilometers along the road. Inche grows *getah* on land of his own."

I turned to Kay. "Do you know the place?"

She nodded. "It's quite easy to find."

"Let's find it."

"Not till I've had tiffin." Her mood had brightened. "Dollah will be furious."

We walked back to the car and I slumped in the seat trying to sort out my thoughts. It was almost too hot to think. If Inche turned into a dead end, what then?

The cast on my arm had begun to chafe; I'd done a lot of sweating and moving around. I'd been crazy to let Gabb do this to me.

The car pulled in under the shade of the garage. I stared at the lipstick and decided to get it over with as we started up the veranda steps.

I pulled back the sling. "I've been branded," I frowned. "Pretty, isn't it?"

Kay's green glance passed over the giant, vivid letters. Her expression didn't alter. "I'll have Dollah set an extra plate for you." She turned sharply. "You must be hungry!"

"I want to explain," I said.

"It's self-explanatory. Would you like a stengah first?"

I caught her wrist and pulled her around to face me at the top of the steps.

"Thanks for being sore," I grinned.

"What?"

"It tells me you give a damn."

"Let go of me."

"Suddenly, I want you to care."

"I couldn't care less."

"Cut it out, baby."

"You're hurting my arm."

I PULLED her to me. She wasn't like the others, like Eden and Monique; she wasn't that beautiful. She was only pretty, with sun wrinkles at the edges of her eyes and freckles across her nose. She was only pretty, and it made a difference. She was something apart, a woman I'd begun to believe in when I thought my emotions were all washed up. "Maybe I'd better tell you," I said. "I'm in love with you."

"How very dull." Her eyes were fiery. "Are you quite finished?"

"Not quite." Anger caught up with me. I forced her chin up and kissed her lips. She stood cold and unyielding and a moment later slapped me.

"Monique is a pretty name," she said. "But I don't like it staring at me while I'm being kissed."

The houseboy came to the door. "Tiffin is waiting, mem."

"Dollah," I said. "Get me a hammer."

I pounded on the cast behind the house. I kept hitting Monique's name and finally it disintegrated, like a nightmare breaking up. The cast lay shattered and hung on my arm in chunks of plaster and gauze. I pulled off the stuff and felt a surge of release. To hell with what Gabb thought. He must have left for Kuala Lumpur by now, I realized, and when he got back he could think what he liked. Plaster had taken hair with it, and my skin burned. I looked at the scar on my thumb, like an old enemy returned. Well, I'd manage. I cleaned up my arm as best I could.

The radio was a soft voice in the room when I walked back into the bungalow. An Englishman was giving the news, and the gears of my mind caught. Kay had taken a quick shower and changed into fresh clothes. She was fixing flowers on the table. I listened for a moment, picking up the drift of the news. Radio Malay was explaining the latest fall in rubber prices. I crossed the room and snapped it off before the news spread to general topics, Like Jock Hamilton.

Kay turned.

"Do you mind turning the radio back on. Rubber's gone down another half-cent."

"Tomorrow it'll go back up," I said. Damn it, why hadn't I put the radio out of order earlier, I thought bitterly. I should have done it while Kay was logging in the tappers. "I've got to talk to you."

She returned to the flowers. "You love me. I think you covered the subject."

This brisk cynicism was something new and I didn't like it. "I haven't even begun," I said.

"Didn't I tell you before? What happened on the ship isn't going to happen again."

"That isn't what I had in mind." Did she really think I was only making a play for her?

"Dollah," she said, as he came back with a water carafe. "Please turn the radio on."

"Don't go near it," I snapped.

He gave me a nod and a grin and started for the radio. He took orders from *mem*, not tuan. I cut across his path, pulled the radio around and grabbed all the wires within reach.

Kay bristled, but her voice came out quite cold. "You needn't have done that."

"I said I wanted to talk to you."

"I think you'd better go."

"I'm taking the job."

"What?"

"I'm the new overseer on Jade Tiger."

There was a taut silence, long enough for her expression to change. "Jack—"

"Do I stay or not?"

Her lips parted and then something soft, almost moist, came into her eyes. "You said—"

"I said I loved you."

"Kiss me again, Jack. Stay. Please stay, darling."

We met in the center of the floor, and it was different. Her lips were soft and yielding and it took a long time.

Dollah stood by grinning.

Chapter Sixteen

I WASN'T GOING back to Silver Jubilee.

I drove Kay's Mercury along the river road toward Inche's place, and I brought the kingfisher kris with me. Later I'd go into town and pick up the linen suit I'd been measured for yesterday.

Yesterday? It seemed a month ago. Sumatra was a year ago. Like everyone else I'd struggled against "Malaya memory" ever since I'd settled in the southeast—it had always seemed somehow important not to let my sense of time be crushed under the heavy monotony of the heat and the rains. It was a merry-go-round that never stopped, the days and nights always

the same length, the seasons a rumor, until your memory became a sort of endless checkerboard. But suddenly I wanted to give in to it.

I wanted the past to flicker and blur and fade. I wasn't sure I remembered what Eden looked like any more. I didn't want to remember. Kay was all that mattered now.

I looked out through the windshield slit at the orderly rubber sweeping by. *What if she finds out about the murder in Sumatra, tuan? Will Inspector Kris forget? No, tuan. The police mind doesn't fall into Malaya memory. You will only bring trouble to Jade Tiger.*

I drove a little faster and the parade ground of trees gave way to *talang* and clumps of jungle festooned with vines and orchids and aerial roots. I had been crazy to let myself fall in love. Maybe I'd been a fool, but I just didn't care a damn any more. It was no good trying to talk myself out of Kay. I loved her.

I saw the answer. I couldn't go around lugging the baggage of my past. *I had to find out if I had killed Eden.* It was the only way. I had to start caring who'd killed her and take the chance that it wasn't Jock Hamilton.

The road was narrow and the jungle thickened. Branches lashed the armor as I sped along. I'd go back to Sumatra. I'd hang around long enough to make sure Kay was safe, dope out what was going on, and then I'd return to Sumatra. There'd be no future for me at Jade Tiger unless I

could purge my past. Why had I been kidding myself? There was no other way. I'd go back my own way. The important thing was to keep from getting arrested and go back my own way. I'd find out what had happened during those blank hours in my mind when Eden was murdered. And then I'd get Inspector Kris off my back.

But I wasn't going anywhere until I found out who was trying to foul up Jade Tiger and kill Kay Allison. Maybe this road would take me where I wanted to go. Inche.

I left the car on the road and walked toward the house. It was set in a clearing hacked out of the jungle across the fence from Silver Jubilee—a postage stamp *kaboon* of not more than two dozen rubber trees.

I put out my cigarette and climbed up the short ladder. The door stood open and I saw a Malay woman of about forty sitting inside with a *roco* smoking from her lips. She was working a rolling pin over a mass of dirty coagulum, forming it into the sheets I had seen drying on the veranda. Her eyes looked morose and tired, and her face was worn. She seemed disinterested at my approach.

"I'm looking for Inche," I said.

No answer.

"Are you Inche's wife?"

There was only the squeak of the rolling pin as she spread the coagulum across the table. It was a home-made rubber factory, like thousands of others scattered across Malaya, turning out a low quality product for the lowest price.

"Where do you sell your *getah*?" I asked.

"Inche is not home."

"Where is he?"

"He will not come back."

"Where did he go?"

"He will not come back."

Her eyes were dull, but full of suspicion, and I knew I was far from welcome. The room odors seemed to reach out and cling to my clothes. Inche wouldn't be back. What did that mean? Had he taken off into the jungle? What did *that* mean? If the kris was his, maybe he had come to realize it could be traced and had run away.

"I've got to talk to him," I said.

She didn't answer.

I carried the kingfisher kris in a cloth, and I unwrapped it. "Is this your husband's?"

Her eyes gave it a brief, unwilling glance. She pressed down harder on the rolling pin. She wasn't going to talk. She didn't have to: It was Inche's kris. Inche, who had a few trees of his own, milking them each day like cows.

"If I turn this over to the police," I said, "they'll find Inche. And they'll hang him."

"No, tuan. They will not hang him."

"You know how to get in touch with your husband," I snapped. "Tell him I'll be at Jade Tiger tonight. Tell him to come and see me. Perhaps I will help him."

Who had ordered Ahmad's death? The Nabob? I had to find that out, and Inche could tell me.

The rolling pin squeaked. "Inche goes nowhere."

"Tell him."

"He is dead. I buried him by the river an hour ago..."

I cut off toward town. I began to feel tired and uncertain of myself. The only lead I had was buried by the river.

I crossed the bridge into Kuala Tang and could see the Planter's Club on the hill. The late afternoon heat had settled over town like a pulsing headache. Nothing seemed to move but me. I shot past a Peking cart loaded with sugar cane and turned up toward the tailor shop. I parked and reminded myself that Radio Malaya might still be broadcasting my description. It would only take a few minutes to pick up my suit and I had enough money left to buy a decent pair of shoes. I could remember to keep my scarred hand out of sight that long.

The Chinese, dressed Western style, had my suit ready.

"Guaranteed fit," he beamed. "You see."

There was only a low, lacquered screen to change behind, but I



stripped. The shop was small, and with its glass windows I felt as if I were changing clothes in a fish bowl. A couple of women with the air of planter's wives passed, glanced in and moved regally on. With a decent suit on my back I could stop feeling like a poor relation in hand-me-downs. I could send Gabb back the clothes I had borrowed.

"You like?"

"I like," I said, standing in front of the mirror.

I was sweaty and wanted a shower before I changed clothes. So I went back behind the screen and got out of the cool linen suit and told him to wrap it up.

As I glanced through the window Will Edgett passed.

For a moment I was too startled to react. I was half-naked behind the screen. I reached for my trousers and buttoned up on the way out. The Chinese got in my way and I shoved him into a showcase.

"Tuan, tuan—"

When my feet hit the hot pavement I realized I was still in my socks. I stood outside the tailor shop and looked along the street in the direction Edgett had been going.

It was deserted.

The pavement roasted my feet. I'd look memorable running around town this way. I hurried back into the shop and into my shoes.

THE Chinese obviously thought I'd gone suddenly berserk, and he kept his distance.

"I'll be back," I shouted. "Have my stuff ready."

Edgett must have turned into one of the shops along the street, I thought. He shouldn't be hard to find.

But he was. I strode along the street, glancing in all the shops, and finally reached the bottom of the hill. It began to exasperate me. He had been so close I could almost have reached out and collared him.

I spent almost an hour. I covered every square foot of town. I checked the register at the government rest house. It seemed impossible. He'd vanished. Was it only my imagination playing tricks with the heat frying off the cobbled street?

That was crazy—I'd seen him. Flesh and blood. Will Edgett.

I walked into the Planter's Club and asked around. But suddenly it hit me—he might already have started for Jade Tiger!

I went out again and hurried to the car. Edgett must want that \$5000 like mad to try pulling off the killing on her own estate.

The Chinese was there when I reached the car. Berserk or not, I owed him some money. I tossed him

almost all I had and threw my new suit in the car. Then I got going.

Chapter Seventeen

DARK CLOUDS were rising from the south and in less than an hour it was going to rain. I drove into the garage and leaped out of the sedan. I had shot almost an hour in town looking for Edgett when he might already have come out here. Daylight was fading, but the heat held on, close and muggy.

I went up the veranda steps and I could hear Kay's voice. She was on the telephone. My muscles eased; Edgett hadn't come. I'd been a fool for letting my fears go out of control. He'd plan something reasonably clever; something with an escape hatch. He must know he could walk onto Jade Tiger to earn his \$5000, but he wouldn't be alive to walk off. I wondered if he'd ditched Hoven in Malacca Town.

Kay rang off as I came in the door.

"Telegram from Singapore," she said, a sort of bitter amusement in her eyes.

"I thought you were wearing your gun."

"It gets very warm wearing a gun."

"I want you to take it even when you go for a shower."

"Yes, Big Master. Did I tell you? I just got a telegram from Singapore, darling."

Calm down, I told myself. You've had a scare. It's over now. "Congratulations," I said.

"My private detective has traced Edgett and Hoven."

I put out my cigarette. "Go on."

"He says the two of them left Singapore two days ago aboard the *Perak*."

"The guy's brilliant."

"He wants to know if he should continue working on the matter."

It was a grim joke. We didn't laugh.

She said, "Shall I pay him for his startling intelligence?"

"Better give him the sack."

"I just did. By telegram."

"Sit down and listen. Edgett's in Kuala Tang. I saw him about an hour ago, and I thought he'd come out here."

"Jack—"

"I saw him and I lost him. Now will you get your gun and put it on? Because I love you?"

"Hoven?"

"I don't know. Maybe. Or maybe my letter broke up their partnership. All I saw was Edgett."

"He wouldn't dare come out here."

"It depends on how hungry he is for the Nabob's fee. You can count on one thing, he didn't come to Kuala Tang for the climate."

"Did you talk to Inche?"

"No. He's dead."

She turned. The thing was building up, like the clouds on the horizon. Two natives dead and now Edgett had shown up. "What about the kris?"

"It was his, all right. It looks to me as if I was on the right track. Inche knew something. Someone got worried, and shut him up for good."

She faced me. "Someone?"

"Either the Nabob, or a reasonable facsimile. We'll get the answers from Edgett. I'm glad he's around. Frightened?"

"No." She hesitated. "Yes—I suppose, a little."

I stationed a Sikh with a rifle at the bottom of the Jade Tiger road. I left a description of both Edgett and Hoven, and instructions to bring either or both in under guard if they were found nosing around. The last thing I wanted was for Edgett to get killed as a trespasser. I wanted to talk to him.

The Sikh, after a knowing glance at the sky, had brought his rain cape with him, and I supposed I might only be wasting his time. Once the rain hit, only a fool would be out in it, and I stopped thinking of Edgett as a fool.

I went back to the bungalow, showered and got into my new clothes. The gloom had lifted a little around the house. Kay had a sundowner waiting on the veranda and I flopped in a longchair.

"You look handsome," she smiled. "Very pukka sahib."

WE talked and I worked on my drink. We watched the Sumatra storm roll in, lashing the rubber trees a mile away. It crept closer with its howling voice and wet fingers. And finally it reached the bungalow, but we stayed out on the protected veranda and Dollah refilled our glasses.

A Sumatra. A dozen hours ago this same rain might have been lashing my own trees and my own house across the Straits of Malacca.

"What are you thinking, darling?"

"Someday soon," I said, frowning. "I'm going to have to leave. But I'll be back."

"I love you, Jack. Can't you tell me?"

"No, baby. I can't tell you."

She reached across the longchairs and kissed my cheek. "Then I won't ask you again."

"And when I get back," I said. "We'll do things to Jade Tiger. We'll make it the best plantation in Malaya."

"It once was."

"How many trees have the terrorists ruined?"

"Altogether?"

"Altogether."

"More than three thousand."

That figured to between seventeen and eighteen total acres put out of production. It meant about six thousand pounds of crude rubber a year lost.

"Have you replanted?" I asked.

She shrugged and played with her glass. "What good does it do? When we had Red trouble a year ago they hacked any trees they could reach. But this latest outbreak is different. They go after the saplings."

"That doesn't make sense."

"I'm sorry, but that's what they're doing. They even broke into the nursery once and destroyed the seedlings. Occasionally they'll slash a few aging trees."

"Then your best trees are still in production."

"Fortunately, they've been left alone."

I picked up my drink and stared at the blackening sky. I'd never heard of terrorists caring about which trees they slashed. It had been the same at Silver Jubilee. I remembered now that Gabb had said the last raid had cost him a number of saplings.

Kay said, "Shall we go in?"

"Not yet."

"I've fixed up a bedroom in the bungalow for you."

"Don't you have overseer's quarters?"

"I don't mind your living in the house."

"It may start a lot of talk."

"Are you worried about my reputation?"

"I suppose I am."

"I'm not, darling."

She smiled, and a little later we went in to dinner.

"I f's for you, Jack."

Kay held out the phone, and her green eyes went cold. I wasn't expecting any calls and for a moment I only stared at her. Monique? By this time the line to Silver Jubilee must be back in order. But I didn't think Monique would call me—not here.

The Sumatra had settled into a night sheet of rain outside the window. We had finished dinner and were having cigarettes. I left the table and took the phone from her.

"Hello?"

"This is Mahmood, tuan." There was alarm in his voice. "Mem says you must come at once."

"What's wrong?"

"Come at once."

"Tell me what's happened!"

"Bandits are at work on the *ka-boon*."

"Put *mem* on the phone."

"Mem cannot come. She has been hurt."

I glanced across the room to Kay, who had picked up her cigarette and seemed to be trying not to listen. I glanced at the black downpour framed by the windows. "All right," I said bitterly. "Tell *mem* I'll be right over."

I hung up and faced Kay. "There's bandit trouble at Silver Jubilee. Apparently they've been shooting things up around the house. Monique's been hurt."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Kay said stiffly. "I've always been fond of her."

"Cut it out, baby! Look—Silver Jubilee's the last place I want to go tonight. But I've got to help out. Gabb's in K.L. and she's over there alone."

Her eyes softened a little. "Of course, darling. I don't mean to say things like that. I just do, from time to time."

"Do you mind if—" "

"No. Take the car."

"Tell Dollah to go down and alert your lines. The bandits might decide to move across the river."

"I doubt it."

"What do you mean?"

"Even the Reds know enough to keep in out of the rain."

It made me a little angry. "These boys are eccentric," I snapped. "They only slash saplings."

"You're keeping Monique waiting."

"If she's trying to pull something, I'll break her neck."

"I'd rather you didn't." She held my arms and reached up and kissed me. "I don't want you to get that close to her, darling."

"The phone's working now at Silver Jubilee," I said. "If you need me, call. But I may be back pretty quick."

"Do come back quick."

She watched me go, giving me a small, unhappy smile. I hung around Jade Tiger long enough to get a turbaned field conductor on the veranda, taking up his gun post as he had the night before. I stopped worrying about Kay's safety, and that was something.

I followed under the shelter of the eaves and reached the garage without getting wet. I backed out and started for Silver Jubilee.

Chapter Eighteen

MONIQUE WAS LYING in black pongee coolie slacks on the chaise longue. She was reading a scrap book of press clippings. Monique, and where she danced, I thought angrily.

The houseboy retired in silence once he let me in, and I came quickly to my senses. There were no bandits. Kay had been right. There was only Monique.

"*Bonjour, M'sieu Jack,*" she said

throatily, without looking up from the clippings. Despite the calm arrogance of her manner, she was nervous. I could see it.

I stood on the marble floor and tried to clamp down my temper. I could see what was coming, and I didn't like it.

I turned sharply and walked back to the door. She was Gabb's wife, and I was sorry, but she could go to hell. I had been tricked into coming and I felt like a fool. The important thing was not to lose my temper. The important thing was to leave before I cut loose on her. The knob turned, but the door only rattled in the jamb. Mahmood had locked it from the outside.

Monique pretended not to notice.

I said, "You're full of tricks tonight, aren't you?"

SHE turned another page of clippings.

I crossed to the chaise longue, took the book out of her hands and flung it to the floor.

"Well?"

Her large, moody eyes covered me with that same web-like glance she had used the first time we had met. She wore a sheer brocaded blouse with a mandarin collar that gave her neck long, fragile lines.

"Monique," she said quietly, watching me, "always gets what she wants."

"What do you want?"

She smiled, but it was only window-dressing. Tonight she was the girl from Lavender Street, and it wasn't very pretty. "You."

"I'm glad you spelled it out," I said coldly. "Maybe I didn't make myself clear last night. I'm not interested in Monique. You've wasted your time. It won't work. Is that spelling it out clearly enough?"

"Still you worry about Gabriel?" She pulled up her knees. "See? I don't worry about him when he is far away."

"I'll bet you don't."

"I used to be angry when he'd leave me and go to Singapore. But I learned to amuse myself. Often he would go to Singapore."

I glowered at her. "Are you trying to say something?"

She shrugged, and there was a certain derision in her dark eyes. I thought of Eden's shopping trips to Singapore, and the cigarette lighter with the funny acid stains that nagged my mind, making me wonder if the lighter was the same one Eden had given me, but it still didn't make sense. I watched Monique's lips curl, and I felt silly standing there letting her watch me burn.

"Come, sit down, beautiful fool," she said wryly. "I will fix you a drink myself."

"Don't bother."

"M'sieu Jack," she purred. "Am I not lovely tonight? You find me irresistible, yes?"

"I'm trying to resist breaking your neck, Mahmood!"

"Is the Aussy girl so pretty as Monique?"

I turned and tried again. "Mahmood!"

"He will not come, *mon ami*. Only when I call. Monique always gets what she wants, eh?"

"Listen," I said. "Listen and get it straight. I find you easy to resist and boring to boot. Now get your hooks out of me. I'm not interested. Go to hell. Good night."

I crossed to a window, picked up a chair and slammed it into the glass. It was a crazy impulse, but I wasn't going to make the round of the doors, and I wanted out. The glass burst, but when the chatter of falling pieces died away, Monique began to laugh.

"The Aussy girl waits for you, eh, M'sieu Jack? You have no time for Monique—is that what you think?"

I was too mad to think straight. I knew Monique's dark eyes were on me, watching, smiling. I got one long leg out of the window when her voice stopped me.

"Your stengah is ready—*Jock Hamilton!*"

I froze.

BEYOND the veranda, the rain rode in on a moaning wind. For a moment, time stalled on me. Then I turned. I saw her standing at the bar with my stengah in her hand. Her eyes were surly and swirling with contempt.

"The name," I said, "is familiar."

"You think I was fooled?" She jerked her head angrily. "Salaud! I have known since the moment you came. *Oui*, I know about you. Perhaps now you want your drink, eh?"

I left the window and walked slowly across the cold marble floor. "Have you called the police?"

"Not yet."

"What are you waiting for?"

The smile was back. "Come, M'sieu Jack. Have your drink. It isn't necessary to talk of these things. Now we understand each other, eh?"

"It's very necessary. I didn't kill my wife."

"That doesn't interest me."

"How did you know about me?"

"When the police came to question Gabriel, I heard. He didn't know I was listening, and Gabriel thinks I'm a child. That is funny, *n'est-ce pas?*"

"I'll laugh later."

"When you came suddenly to Silver Jubilee, I knew it must be the man the police ask about. And last night on the radio—your thumb, yes?"

I grunted. "Yes."

"But of course! Ah, you look so worried, M'sieu Jack. Do you think I would give you away to the police?"

"I think you would."

"But Monique wants to protect you!"

"Let's stop playing games," I said harshly. "I drink your stengah and sit on your chaise longue and you keep your mouth shut. That's what you're thinking, isn't it?"

"Is it such a bad time for love when it rains?"

"I have no intention of being blackmailed into bed with you."

"It is such an ugly word, M'sieu Jack. And Monique is so beaut—"

"I really despise you, but Gabb loves you," I snapped.

"He loves his acres of *getah*, not Monique! He stands on the veranda and almost as far as the eye can see he sees his trees growing. That's what he loves! Me, I am only an amusement."

"I don't find you amusing."

"I promise you—I can be very amusing."

"To hell with it."

Anger flared in her eyes again. "I have only to reach for the phone. It works now!"

I strode across the floor and yanked the phone out by its roots.

"*Saleté!*" Monique exploded. "You think that does any good? Go back to Jade Tiger! She is very fine, eh? What is Monique? A dancer from Lavender Street. The Australian wouldn't even ride along Lavender Street, eh? I know about her airs and her fine family. *Oui*, I know. Freckles, she has!" She put her hands on her hips and laughed. "Freckles like pockmarks! You think she is beautiful? Go back to her, *murderer!* But maybe now she won't want you."

"What are you trying to say, baby?"

"I sent a note. I told her who you are."

"What?"

"*Oui!* Now she knows you are a murderer. At this moment she reads my letter. Go back to this fine one, eh? See if now she will take you in her arms!" Monique's grin was turning into a smile. "Perhaps now you get thirsty for my stengahs, eh?"

I found my voice. "Shut up."

"Now we will be friends, eh? While it rains?"

I must have looked funny, just standing there. My fine resolutions turned to water.

"I go to bed now, M'sieu Jack." She called to Mahmood and had the door to her bedroom unlocked.

I just looked at her, still stunned. Kay knew.

There wouldn't be any doubt in her mind. I was wanted, and I had fled. That could only mean I was guilty, and I couldn't blame her.

But that didn't help me much. Kay had become the only thing in the world that mattered, and now she was gone. Damn Monique! Just to make sure I gave her a full night's entertainment, Monique had ruined me. Completely. There was no escape from this final straw. Suddenly I felt like the proverbial camel. My back was broken and I was too tired to care any more.

I sat down and stared at Monique. "You've got all the cards," I said. "Now let's see you play them." After what she had done to me with Kay, nothing else mattered much, and I certainly wasn't going to give her what she wanted. What she had ruined me to get. Let her call the police. I picked up a cigarette and lit it, then bounced the lighter around in the palm of my hand and looked at Monique.

Monique stood in the doorway. I could see the thoughts going across her face as she watched me. I wasn't bluffing, and I guess she realized it. I just didn't care any more.

Finally she shrugged and walked out, looking pretty pathetic, like a kid who has just lost a brand-new toy. I had a hunch she wouldn't even bother notifying the police. There isn't much point hurting someone who won't fight back.

Then I settled back to do some serious thinking. When Gabb returned, he was going to wonder what had become of the cast on my arm, and I could see him at breakfast looking from Monique to me and back again.

I actually began to feel sorry for him. Poor fool. Monique was strictly from Lavender Street, no better and no worse than Eden had been. Then I realized I couldn't afford to feel sorry for anyone but Jock Hamilton. Gabb was my friend, but he was also a half-breed, accepted by no one and suspicious of everything that might remotely resemble an insult. And this situation wasn't even remote. I could visualize him insane with jealousy, and the idea didn't appeal to me. He wouldn't bother to wait and find out what had really happened. Not Gabb. He'd act first and find out later.

I didn't want to be around when he acted, but I couldn't go across the river to the Jade Tiger. I'd rather stand up to Gabb in all his fury than have to look at Kay and see the disappointment and the inevitable bitterness in her face.

On that pleasant note I fell asleep in the chair. I must have dozed for quite a while, because when I woke up it was getting that chill in the air that comes before the dawn. I lit a cigarette and tried to think, but my

mind was groggy and refused to function. There was so much pressing in on me that none of it made sense. Gabb on one side and Kay on the other.

I peered at my cigarette in the darkness. It had a different taste. American? I had been smoking Capstans for years; it was an acquired taste, and I'd acquired it. These must be Monique's cigarettes. My mind began to clear. I remembered. I had dropped my lighter overboard because it had stopped working.

But this felt like my lighter.

I fired it, and looked at it under the flame. What the devil—it was my lighter. There was the gold hamdryad skin. There were the little wings you twisted to release the spring.

I looked for the acid stains Kay had noticed on the ship, the stains that had made her wonder if I might be a planter after all.

There were no acid stains.

I came fully awake—this didn't make sense. My lighter was somewhere at the bottom of the harbor. Duplicates?

It had to be. I calmed down. Eden hadn't given me the only snake-skin lighter ever made.

Chapter Nineteen

I MUST HAVE fallen asleep in the longchair.

There was a raucous laugh in my ear and a big hand shoved my shoulder.

"Is this the kind of welcome I get? Wake up, you lazy son of a hedge-lawyer!"

Gabb was back.

He stood over me, casting a giant's shadow with his back to the sun. "You're back early," I said.

"There's work to be done! I'm not on vacation like a man named after a gin bottle!"

Back early, eh? Did he expect to catch me in bed with his wife?

I was stiff from the chair. I sat forward and rubbed my neck. "What time is it?"

"Past nine. Hungry? Give me time to shower and we'll have breakfast on the veranda. Where's Monique?"

I looked up and saw his eyes pass along my arm. The cast was gone, but there was no chink in his grin. "I suppose," I said, "she's in bed."

He laughed. "What can you do with these city wives?"

"Monique is *not* in bed." She came through the door in white shorts, a scrap of batik for a bra, and wooden *trompoks* on her feet. They clattered slowly on the veranda as she went to Gabriel and let herself be kissed.

"Take your shower," Monique said. "Mahmood has our breakfast almost ready."

He tousled her hair and loped off into the house. What was he thinking? Would he believe I'd spent the whole night in a longchair?

Monique slipped into the chair beside me and bent to take a light off my cigarette. "You slept peacefully, M'sieu Jack?"

"Why don't you clear out of his life?" I said. "You hate it here."

"You expect me to walk out on the richest planter in Selangor?"

"When he finds out what you are, he'll kill you."

"What am I, *mon ami*?"

"A dirty animal."

"Be kind to animals, M'sieu Jack."

She lay her head back and crossed her legs. It was impossible to insult her; I should have had more brains than to try.

Mahmood began setting breakfast dishes on the veranda, his speckled eyes avoiding us. I just sat there with my cigarette. My stomach was empty, but I didn't feel hungry. Suddenly, I knew if I hung around I was going to put Gabb straight. I wasn't going to sit through breakfast, eat his food, and pretend his wife had not tried to rape me. I'd better leave before I tore up what little happiness he'd built up with Monique. Edgett. I'd get going and see if I could turn him up.

"Tell Gabb I went to Kuala Tang on business."

She laughed, or maybe it was a sneer. "You are afraid to face him, yes?"

"I'm afraid if I have to look at him again I'll open up. I'm funny that way."

"Perhaps you don't go to Kuala Tang. Perhaps you go to Jade Tiger, eh?"

"Why don't you get off my back?"

"You think I care? Go. You become tiresome."

I got to my feet, but hesitated a moment. "There's one thing I'd like to know. Where did you get that cobra-skin cigarette lighter?"

"That? It isn't mine."

"No?"

"It belongs to Gabriel."

"Where did he get it?"

"Ask him."

"It's not that important."

"You will be back for tiffin, M'sieu Jack?"

"It's not likely."

I walked along the veranda, hurried down the steps and cut out toward the garage and Kay's sedan. It seemed strange to be walking away from Monique. She must be laughing at me, I thought. She knew I wasn't going to Jade Tiger. She'd fixed up my welcome there. She'd fixed it up real nice.

"Jock, my old friend—stand where you are!"

I had reached the edge of the garage and I turned. Gabb was standing at the end of the veranda and the sun sparked off the barrel of a revolver.

"Come, my old friend! We'll have a bit of breakfast together!"

There was a grin on his face, but fury in his voice. He knew. The gun was aimed directly at me.

I walked back up the steps, and the revolver was waiting for me. Mahmood was setting out fried eggs as if nothing was happening a few feet away.

"That's it, old friend." Gabb gestured with the gun. "Over there, next to the young beauty from Lavender Street. We'll all sit and have a hearty breakfast."

I LOOKED at his face and decided the truth would be worse than no defense at all.

"You can put away the gun," I said. "Stop making a fool of yourself."

"A fool, am I? How right you are, old friend!"

"Cut it out."

"Did the cast get in your way, lad? You must tell me at what delightful moment you broke it off. Midnight? Two in the morning? Or was it early afternoon, just after I left?"

I saw that the gun was covering Monique as well. She'd obviously been ordered to the table, and she held a fork clutched in her hand. "Mahmood lied to you!" she spat.

"I'm sure he has, my dear. But not this morning."

"But it's not true!" Monique protested. "Please—"

His glance silenced her. His playful mood had turned into something cold and deadly. "I will not be laughed at! No, my friends, I will do the laughing, Mahmood!"

"Gabriel—"

"Mahmood!"

The servant came onto the veranda, his eyes seeing no one but Gabb.

"Yes, tuan."

"Mahmood! You will take my car and go to town." Gabb threw the keys at him. "You will tell the constable I'm holding Jock Hamilton at Silver Jubilee."

"I understand, tuan."

"Go quickly and bring him back."

My pulse began to hammer. So that was it. He'd get his revenge, nice and legal. I looked at the revolver in his hand. It would take a long reach and I knew how fast and straight Gabb could shoot. Now Monique began to get really frightened.

"Gabriel!" Monique cried out. "Listen to me—it is true what Mahmood told you. *Oui*, it is true. I would have told you myself. I fought this creature of a friend of yours.

'Tnis pig! How I fought him! *Oui*, with my teeth and my fingernails, but he has muscles like steel—I see, I tried to run out the window, to escape this filthy—"

I turned sharply. Her voice was rising to a scream and I felt like strangling her. The little bitch! But what difference did it make what Gabb thought now? He hadn't hesitated to turn me in.

"Of course, my angel." He gestured with the gun. "Come here."

"You believe me, my husband?"

"How could such an innocent face lie? Stand beside your husband. How lovely she is made, eh, Jock?"

Monique left her chair for the other side of the table. She was trying to smile. "*Oui, mon ami*. I wanted to tell you—see the window is broken. I fought like a tigress!"

"I'm sure you did," he said softly. "And now you may go—in a moment." He smiled sadistically. "When you came you had nothing, remember? Yes, you will go—also with nothing."

He spun her around and ripped the batik off her breasts. Within seconds he had pulled every stitch of clothing off her.

"That's the way I found you!" he shouted. "Now go. Go back to Lavender Street."

"*Gabriel*—"

"You have no money? Perhaps in Kuala Tang you can earn your fare back to Singapore."

"But you cannot let—"

"Out of my sight! Let them laugh at you along the road. They will see how I have thrown you out of my house."

I heard the clack of her *trompoks* on the veranda. I saw her naked back as she went down the steps into the sun. She kept her shoulders straight. Her terror had gone. There could be only fury in her eyes now, I thought. She had survived—on Gabb's terms—and it must have been galling. But she had survived and some of her pride survived too. The sun turned her skin golden and she walked as if she knew she made a beautiful sight. Gabb stood watching her.

"She goes off into the trees to walk. Perhaps one of my tappers will get her a sarong."

Maybe he still cared a little. But he laughed.

I looked away and Gabb strode back and forth along the veranda, grinning and enjoying the feel of the gun in his hand. He was buoyant and I could almost forget he was marking time until the police came.

"I have made something of my estate, eh? Do you know I'm one of the biggest landowners in Selangor. Look at my trees? Beautiful, eh?"

The sun was broiling and you could hear an occasional pod explode.

What had Monique said—he stands on the veranda and almost as far as the eye can see he sees his trees growing. I was looking out at the lush trees across the river. Jade Tiger. Almost. My thoughts jarred; the pieces were beginning to fall in place.

Monique's bag had spilled out on the floor. I turned and picked up the snake-skin cigarette lighter. "Is this yours?"

His revolver flashed in the sun. "There is a car coming."

I could hear it on the road below, but for a moment I didn't care. "The lighter," I said.

"You are interested in such novelties? Yes, it is mine."

"Where did you get it?"

He hesitated, glancing at me with an off-center grin, and shrugged. "In Singapore."

"Eden bought me one just like it," I said. "In Palembang."

"I've never been in Palembang."

"That's not what I was thinking."

"What do I care what you think! Stand where you are!"

The police were already on the estate and winding closer. I eyed Gabb's revolver and glanced down to the road; it was now or never. But when I caught sight of the car, I saw it wasn't the police.

"You're getting company," I said. "In a taxi."

He saw it too. "All right—stand there. I would be delighted if you try to break away, eh? It will give me a good excuse to shoot you down."

"Go to hell."

The taxi swung in front of the house and I recognized the overweight Malay at the wheel. Majid. The back door swung open and a lanky guy in a wilted linen suit got out of the cab.

"I say," he beamed, spotting Gabb on the veranda. "Your phone's been dead and I've had a bloody time of it getting a ride out here. This insane taxi driver insists you've got an army of blasted terrorists around—I've been trying since yesterday to get him to bring me out."

It was Will Edgett.

Chapter Twenty

"YOU KOOL!" Gabb exploded. "What are you trying to do—coming here!"

"What?" Edgett started up the veranda steps. "Well, I thought I'd better report exactly what—you see, there was this note on the ship—"

"You bloody idiot!"

Edgett saw me and vague recognition struck. "Hullo—haven't we met before?"

I didn't hang around long enough for him to place me; Gabb must know Edgett put an official seal on my interlocking suspicions. If Gabb had any brains he'd try to silence me before the police showed up.

Gabb had brains. And suddenly I had become dangerous to him.

The window I had broken the night before stood only a few feet away. I turned and leaped through it.



"Don't let on you think it's not a perfect fit. He's very temperamental."

I must have been out of sight almost before Gabb realized what was happening. I raced through the house and reached the back door before I heard his voice booming through the hall. I pushed through the door and leaped the back veranda rail to the gravel footpath. The garage was to my right. I crouched and ran.

"Jock!"

His voice was in the open. It burst through the trees like thunder. I got to the end of the house and he spotted me.

I sprinted for the protection of the garage and a shot rocked the still morning. A stone flew apart on the path in front of me and Gabb was bellowing warnings.

I got around the garage wall and had the ignition key in my hand when I reached Kay's sedan. Footsteps pounded on the veranda. I piled into the car and got the door locked. I turned the key and pressed the starter. The engine wouldn't catch.

Stone cold.

I kept working on it, and then there was the pounding of footsteps in the garage. I got a flash of Gabb as I glanced through the window slit. His high cheekbones were mirrors of sweat. He pressed the gun tip to the slot, but the engine caught and I let out the clutch in gear. The car jerked and stalled as he fired.

His point-blank aim went wild, but the explosion burst my eardrums. The car started and I backed out blindly, spinning the wheel. The armor rang with another hit; I got into low gear and shot forward past the house. I saw Majid's unarmored taxi ahead of me on the road. He'd probably taken off at the first sound of the shooting.

Gabb emptied his revolver in a blind fury; slugs peppered the car, but he was wasting ammunition and time. I overtook Majid fast and rocketed down the winding road. Monique's Ford was still behind in the garage and I knew Gabb had come to his senses—hurried into the house to get some cartridges and find the ignition key.

I COULD get a gun at Jade Tiger. Gabb would guess I'd head there. I hated to lead him there, but I saw no choice. And I had to talk to Kay. I had things to tell her. Maybe she wouldn't want to see me, but she'd have to listen.

I reached the bottom of the hill and turned off toward the river. Where were the police? I got to the bridge. When I entered the Jade Tiger road I saw the field conductor still standing his post. He waved and I stopped short. I backed up and opened the door to talk to him. I knew if he tried to stop Gabb from coming onto

the plantation Gabb would blow him apart.

"Knock off," I said. "Go get some sleep."

He grinned in his black beard and nodded.

I slammed the door and toolled up the road to the bungalow. Dollah was sweeping the veranda and he stopped to peer at me. I pulled the car around back, left the motor running and started for the house. If Gabb made it faster than I hoped and the breaks went against me, I'd need those extra seconds. I wanted to lead him away from Jade Tiger as soon as he showed.

I strode through the kitchen. "Kay!"

The house was quiet as hell. I entered the living room and I saw her. She was standing at the window with her back toward me. She didn't move.

"Kay—"

There was someone else in the room.

There was a man seated in a rattan chair. A little man in a soiled suit. There was a *stroodje* curling smoke from the brown fingers of one hand and a police pistol in the other.

It was Inspector Aziz ben Kris. From Sumatra.

Chapter Twenty-one

"YOU WILL RAISE your arms, please."

His teeth were yellow and his glossy hair was long over his ears. He wore a black fiber fez and he wore it at a rakish angle.

I glared at him, startled for an instant, and then I was too weary to care. He'd caught up with me, but we were still a long way from Sumatra.

"What brought you?" I muttered. "Last night's rainstorm?"

He acknowledged his victory with a smile. He could afford to smile now. "The mousedeer may forget the snare," he said. "But the snare never forgets the mousedeer."

"I've heard that before."

"You will raise your arms."

"I don't have a gun."

"But I do. Up, please."

I thought quickly of the car with the motor running out back, but I couldn't leave. I couldn't even try. Not yet. I ignored Inspector Kris' gun and strode toward Kay. She was wearing that belt of old Mex dollars and as she stood at the window the silver coins gleamed.

"Look, baby, hate me if you want to," I said uneasily. "You know about me and I didn't want you to know—but I guess it really doesn't matter any more."

She turned and her green eyes were

moist and tired. She smiled stubbornly, a private smile just for me, and suddenly her eyes were lovely. "I don't hate you, Jack. I couldn't."

"The name is Jock," I said bitterly. "Jock Hamilton. The little man with the gun says I killed my wife."

"Must I believe the little man with the gun?"

Inspector Kris was getting impatient. "I have extradition papers," he said from behind us. "Now we will go."

"Listen to me, Kay," I said harshly. "I know who's been making all the trouble at Jade Tiger and I know why. He's on his way over and you'd better have your boys break out some guns. I don't want you to get hurt."

"Jock—"

"*Gabb is the Nabob.*"

HER eyes widened, but I didn't let her disbelief get into words.

"Get going," I snapped. ".*Break out some guns!*"

But she only stood there. "What about you?"

"The little man standing behind me has a funny mind." I glanced out along the veranda, but Dollah had finished up with the broom and taken off somewhere. "Inspector Kris thinks murder is always a family affair—he read it in a book somewhere. Nothing short of a confession is going to change his mind."

"Darling—"

"Sure, he's going to have a fine time getting me out of here when Gabb shows up. He doesn't know that yet. Maybe I'd better tell him. *Will you get some boys and some guns!*"

I turned and Inspector Kris nodded with his yellow grin. "It will not be so hard." He produced a pair of handcuffs.

"That's not what I mean," I said. "Kay—hurry!"

"I heard your talk of guns," Inspector Kris said. "I'm sorry, but the young lady will remain in the room until we go. I'm not so easily tricked."

"Listen," I shouted. "You're a cop. There's a man coming over here who hired a couple of professional killers to work on the *mem*. That's a crime, isn't it?"

"If true. But I have no authority in Malaya. I'm a visitor. I have only extradition papers."

"Don't listen to him, Kay!"

She lifted her chin slightly and that familiar self-assured look came into her eyes. "I intend to protect myself, Inspector."

"I must ask you, please—"

"You'll have to shoot me to keep me from walking out of this room."

Kay began to walk. Inspector Kris saw the situation slipping out of his hands, but he couldn't pull the trigger.

"I warn you," he complained. "I shoot my prisoner at the first sign of trickery."

She kept walking. He couldn't stop her and he knew it. He let her go, bit his lip and did the only thing he could think of. He told me to hold out my hands.

I eyed his gun and thought of the car idling out back, but I held out my wrist. He might be a rotten detective, but even a blind man could hit me at less than a yard. "I'll take your warning," I said.

He slapped one cuff on my wrist. It grated and locked.

"How did you trace me here?"

"It was very easy. I received a telegram."

"What?"

"It informed us you were hiding at Silver Jubilee. I immediately crossed the Straits by police launch. It is waiting for us at the jetty in Kuala Tang."

"Please, your other wrist."

"Who sent it?"

"There was no signature. Anonymous. It is often that way."

"Where did it come from? I've got to know!"

"Kuala Lumpur."

I held my one hand free of the cuff. *Kuala Lumpur!* It jarred me—*Gabb had turned me in!* Not just an hour ago. Yesterday! And it had nothing to do with Monique.

"Your other wrist, tuan!"

I froze with my arm wide. I could hear the hum of a car speeding up the road. At the same instant I saw Kay across the room. She had taken off her shoes and she stood in the doorway with a double-barreled Jeffery Special in her hands. My God—if she pulled the trigger she'd blow us both apart. It was an elephant gun!

STILL, I thought quickly. I matched up my wrist. Keep him talking. "You win," I said. "I still don't understand why you were waiting for me at Jade Tiger."

Kay didn't make a sound.

"I regret the imposition. The *mem* has been most kind." He cracked the other cuff on my wrist and his confidence flowered. "There is only the one police car in Kuala Tang and it broke down in the storm last night not far from here. I walked in the rain and saw lights here. The Indian at the bottom of the road conducted me to the house and the *mem* was kind enough to allow me to stay. This morning I wait for the car to be fixed and take me to Silver Jubilee, but you saved me the trouble. Perhaps that will be my friends now."

"I don't think so," I said.

He grinned and looked out the window and Kay stopped a few feet behind him.

"Drop your gun, Inspector!"

He spun, but the sight of the elephant gun paralyzed his trigger. It was almost funny to watch. His jaw fell, his eyes bugged with shock, but he dropped the gun.

I stooped and got it off the floor and turned it on him.

"Unlock these damned things. Make it fast!"

Inspector Kris went through his pockets, fumbled the keys, and dropped them, stalling.

I lost my temper. I raised the gun in my hand as he bent for the keys, and I struck him with the butt.

He folded with an airy sigh.

Kay swept the keys off the floor and unlocked me. "That's Monique's car coming."

"I know. Did you get your boys alerted for trouble?"

"There wasn't time."

I turned desperately toward the window. "Maybe I can scare him off with your elephant gun," I bent and got hold of Inspector Kris and dragged him out of the living room and into the nearest bedroom.

"Take his revolver," I snapped. "Stay with him, and when he comes too, keep him off my back."

I closed the bedroom door on them and picked up the rifle. At least she wouldn't catch a stray bullet in there. I got to the front windows as Monique's Ford pulled up in the drive. There were only two shells in the gun, but I let go with one of them. The explosion rocked the house and filled my nostrils with cordite. It struck armor and must have split the eardrums of the two of them inside. Or had Gabb ditched Edgett as worthless and come alone?

The Ford moved and turned at the corner of the house and crept back again, as if reconnoitering. Gabb wasn't going to scare off. The car kept on the move in front of the house, like a nervous crab on the beach. A shot burst from the armor slit and shattered a window near me. I stayed low, following the car with the rifle sights. Gabb let go with another shot. He'd spotted me at the window.

I moved to a new position. My hands began to sweat on the metal of the gun. The Ford kept cruising. What was Gabb waiting for? I'd been a fool for not getting set with a box of cartridges. I wondered if I dared yell out to Kay. Better not take the chance that Inspector Kris was coming to.

Well, all I needed was one shot, and I'd save it. Gabb would get tired of roaming and breaking house windows. If he misunderstood my silence he might figure he'd gotten a lucky shot and come out from behind the armor. I'd be ready.

I crouched at the window and all the little things that hadn't made sense during the last couple of days began to make a very real sense. There were the months of trouble Kay had been having on Jade Tiger, the overseers who had been frightened off, the slashed trees—only the very young and the very old—and Ahmad with the kingfisher's kris in his back. It all made sense, and I knew that it added up to a lot more than just Jade Tiger.

"Don't move!"

The voice came from inside the house. Behind me. I froze. It was Gabb's voice.

"Did you think that was me in the car, eh?" I heard his steps come closer. "It is Edgett. Me, I got out of the car in the trees and walked in the back door. What an idiot you are, old friend!"

"You're full of surprises."

"Fire the rifle in the sky until it is empty."

I fired it.

"Now you can turn around."

He was still using the nickel-plated revolver and it looked more deadly than before. "Where are the others?"

"I cleared the place," I said. "I figured you'd show up."

HE squared his sweat-blotted shoulders, grinning, luxuriating in the moment, and took another step. "Turn around, eh?" he said. "Walk slowly onto the veranda. If you walk too fast my friend Edgett might think you are running away and shoot. Slowly, eh? We will go in the Ford and pick out a nice spot for you."

I glanced from the revolver to Gabb's beaming face and decided not to argue. I had misjudged him in the past, but I wasn't misjudging him now. I saw him finally for what he was—a brutal, ambitious Eurasian with hardened instincts of self-preservation and a flair for cruelty. He'd survive. I had to die. He'd pull the trigger now if he had to, but it would cheat him of a certain extravagance. He would enjoy watching me sweat out a one-way ride. Either way, he'd be doing the police a favor.

"Slowly," I nodded, turning.

I glanced out through the screen door. The Ford had stopped opposite the veranda steps. I began to walk, but my mind raced. Gabb swung around behind me, not close enough to matter, his boots creaking in slow-motion. When I reached the door I stopped and kicked it open. Flies scattered off the screen.

All right, I thought. Let Edgett line up his sights. There was going to be some shooting and I hoped Kay, if she'd been able to hear from the bedroom, had brains enough to stay put.

"Not quite so slowly," Gabb chuckled. "Now—in the car."

"Go to hell, old friend."

I leaped through the doorway, hit the veranda flat—and the crossfire flashed over my back. There was the quick bark of Gabb's revolver close behind me, but Edgett let go wildly and his first slug must have staggered Gabb, standing directly in the range of fire. A confused silence cut in. I whirled and pitched into Gabb as he drew his gun hand away from his hot shoulder. He'd been hit, all right.

We went down together inside the doorway and rolled across the living-room floor.

I worked on his broad wrist to loosen the revolver, but his fingers froze in a claw around it. If Gabb had been jarred by the shock of catching a slug, he came quickly back to life. Before I realized it his free hand had found the handcuffs and he began flailing my face. He swore and writhed under me and even had the nerve to grin.

"Keep grinning, you crazy fool," I heard myself yell. "You killed Eden!"

His eyebrows creased and for a moment I thought he was going to laugh in my face. "What do I care what you think!" He grunted and the jangling handcuffs sliced into my ear.

I swung a foot to nail down the gun, and bounced my knuckles off his chin. His shoulder had tracked blood across the living-room floor, but he was a huge man and he wasn't going to weaken. I ground his hand under my foot and smashed another right into his face and saw fresh blood etch into the creases of his grin.

"You killed Eden and you put up the money to murder Kay!"

He wasn't interested and he wasn't very worried. Edgett was right outside, wasn't he? Edgett ought to be on his way into the house.

But Edgett didn't show and Gabb made a mistake. He twisted sharply and too heavily. His fingers jerked under my foot, got rolled open and smashed.

In another second I had the gun. The muzzle must have looked big and black and about to erupt. Gabb froze there on the floor.

I waited on one knee and caught my breath.

"Jock—"

"You stinking half-breed," I said, and he winced at the word. "You sent the wire to Sumatra turning me in. You wanted to make sure the case got closed—with me taking the rap."

"Put away the gun, eh, Jock? I'm rich—I can—"

"You didn't get that cigarette lighter in Singapore. Eden bought it in Palembang. She gave me one for my

birthday and sent you the other as a gift. Admit it!"

There was cunning in his eyes, but fear too. "I can help you escape. I have cash in the house. All you want—"

"Look at me," I said. "I'm laughing."

"Jock—"

"Admit it!"

"Yes . . . Eden gave me the lighter."

"Was she in love with you?"

"Let me get up. We will talk."

"Move anything but your mouth and I'll blast at your rotten brains. Was Eden in love with you?"

His lips tightened. I grabbed his wet hair and jammed the gun in his left ear. He stiffened. His lips began to flutter.

He talked.

His voice came out high-pitched; the words tumbled out in a flow of rage and desperation. "You want the truth. *I was in love with Eden!* For years! Even before you married her!"

"Louder. Yell it out!"

His blue eyes strained toward the left side of his face and the gun fixed in his ear. "My Chinese blood—she didn't like that. Not to marry. But to meet me in Singapore—that was different."

"Her shopping trips," I said sourly. "Spare me the details. You were in Sumatra the night she was murdered. You were in my house. When you left you picked up my cigarette lighter by mistake. And I carried around yours, with acid stains on it, wondering how the hell they got there. You were in my house that night, and you murdered her! Yell it out!"

"She begged me not to come to your house at all. She was afraid I would tell you about her trips to Singapore to meet me. I came to tell you."

"So I'd throw her out and maybe you could pick up the pieces."

"But she drugged you before I came. You were already asleep when I reached your house."

Sweat was rolling off my fingers onto the trigger of the revolver. I don't know what kept me from squeezing it. I remembered the taste in my mouth the morning I'd found Eden dead. So that was it—she'd drugged the sundowner I'd had on the veranda. The miserable little bitch. If she'd left my drink alone she might still be alive.

"We loved each other!" he said fiercely. "I would take her back with me to Silver Jubilee."

"Just the three of you."

"Monique I would throw out. One tires of a *poombalie*. Today I tired of her. Monique I could always send back to Lavender Street. Like today."

"But it didn't work."

"Eden had a temper—"

"I know."

"She said she would never come to live with me—*never!* She was vile. She called me a half-breed, eh? I lost my temper—"

I shoved hard on the gun and must have touched his eardrum. "Scream it out!"

"Yes, I killed her! Now you know, but the police will never believe you!"

All I could hope was that Inspector Kris in the next room was conscious and listening.

"Eden was only the beginning, wasn't she?" I growled. "Your ambitions caught fire and there was Jade Tiger sitting right under your nose. You had to have it! So you could stand on your veranda and own everything in sight."

SWEAT pooled around his eyes; he was a fraction of an inch away from death and he knew it. "Jock—listen—"

"You tried to intimidate Kay by scaring off her overseers, but she wouldn't budge."

"I can make you rich." There was something close to a sob in his voice.

"Monique invented the bandits last night. But you've been inventing them for a long time!" Contempt and fury built up in me and I barked it out. "A handful of your own natives could slash a lot of trees! Only the saplings and the old rubber!"

"You would be a fool to shoot me."

"It made sense. You didn't want to put the plantation completely out of production—you expected to get your smelly hands on it. Your home-made Reds did just enough slashing to make it convincing. And you convinced everyone the bandits were back! Is that the way you picked up the other *kaboons* you've added to your estate?"

"Take away the gun, eh, Jock?" He was trying to smile, to play the old friends game, but a tremble broke through on his lips. "We—"

"A frightened planter will sell cheap, won't he?"

I heard a noise behind me. It was Kay and it was Inspector Kris. His face was solemn and officious looking.

"I believe," he said, "Tuan Wing is now my prisoner."

Kay was beaming. "He heard, darling. Both of us. We heard it all!"

I knew from his voice Inspector Kris had gotten his gun back from Kay.

"All right," I said. "He's your prisoner."

I let loose of Gabb's hair and unplugged his ear. Kay ran toward me and she was almost crying. She kept calling me names. She kept calling me Big Master, and I loved it. • •

RELAX and ENJOY

MOVIES

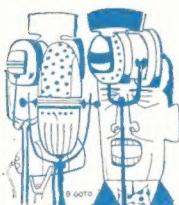


Action: *Shark River* (United Artists). Set in central Florida a long time ago, shortly after the Civil War, that is, this is a good action melodrama, despite a somewhat predictable plot that sometimes substitutes excellent photography of Florida's reptiles and the Everglades scenery for an adequate story. The total effect, however, is good for a pleasant evening of relaxing entertainment. The good brother tries to get the bad brother through the Everglades to escape a murder charge, and although he fails at this, he does get the beautiful widow he finds in the swamp.

Adventure: *The Conquest of Everest* (British Lion-Group Three). A vivid documentary of an event that captured the imagination of the world, this is perhaps the first time in history that stay-at-homes like you and me have been privileged to witness such a remote achievement in anything more than the generally unsatisfactory and disjointed clips of the newsreels. Filmed in breath-taking color and accompanied by an excellent commentary, this is an extraordinary movie.

Western: *Thunder Over the Plains* (Warner Brothers). Another historical movie, this one just before the turn of the century in Texas when reconstruction was still something of an issue, this fast-paced yarn has Randolph Scott facing the problem that has been a favorite of dramatists since not long after Shakespeare—love versus honor. Scott is a native Texan and despises the Northern carpetbaggers who are bleeding his already impoverished state, but he is also a Captain in the Union army with certain duties to perform. And perform them he does, with plenty of action and danger and villains on both sides of the fence to keep things moving.

RECORDS



Serious: The spoken word is rapidly becoming of major importance in the recording business. Carrying on the tradition established years ago by RCA Victor and Sir Laurence Olivier, when excerpts from the sound tracks of Olivier's great film versions of *Henry V* and *Hamlet* were released in album form, expert interpretations of fine drama are getting a big play from the recording companies and record buyers alike. Last year's surprise best-seller of *Don Juan in Hell* has been followed up by releases of everything from classical drama to impressionistic verse as modern as tomorrow. Among the high points of the classical drama are the exciting series of Shakespearean plays acted by the famous Old Vic Theatre troupe. RCA Victor's albums, which will eventually include most of the Bard's major plays, include some outstanding performances by such well-known actors as Alec Guinness, Claire Bloom, and Felix Aylmer.

BOOKS



Railroading: *One Way to Eldorado* (Doubleday, \$3.50) by Hollister Noble. The hardships, the excitement, the perils, the glory—all the authentic details of railroading over the toughest mountain pass in the country are woven into this thrilling story of a man trapped at Eldorado with a hard-bitten section manager, a mysterious girl, a small-time miner and a big-time gambler. Together they witness a locomotive hurtling into a canyon 1,000 feet below, an avalanche that buries Culver City, a train that smashes through twelve cars and a brick wall, and together they are involved in one of the great train robberies of all time. There is romance and suspense in this novel, and the unforgettable story of a great railroad that operates through the mountains in spite of blizzards, avalanches and man-made destruction.

Exploration: *Orinoco Adventure* (Doubleday, \$3.95) by Hector Acebes. This is an explorer's highly personal account of his jungle experiences, and of his daring attempt to reach and explore the headwaters of the Orinoco. With camera in hand, Mr. Acebes traveled as a friend among the tribes of the *Illanos* country and the head-shrinking Jivaro Indians of Ecuador. This unusual explorer had many bizarre and terrifying adventures, such as finding a boa constrictor in his canoe, watching the head-shrinking of a man he had seen alive the day before and battling for his life with a giant anaconda. He tells the intriguing tale of Catini, a *femme fatale* of the jungle who climbed to Rio de Janeiro respectability, and the exciting story of his journey up the Orinoco—a trip as close to an official exploration as his eccentric habits would allow. Mr. Acebes' interest in the natives themselves, his ability to evoke the mystery of the jungle, and his many excellent photographs combine in a very original and entertaining travel-adventure book.

TELEVISION



Humor: Thorne Smith's *Topper* stories are well on the way to becoming an American classic of sorts, and the new TV version helps it along the way. Anne Jeffries and Robert Sterling as the ghostly Kerbys romp through their roles with a real sense of comedy too seldom found in the average TV production, and Leo G. Carroll in the title role adds new distinction to his list of laurels as the confused and bedevilled Cosmo Topper. Topper is one of the more adult and intelligent comedy series to be presented on television—the deliciously funny inventions of Thorne Smith are tastefully treated by good actors, and smart production makes it a show that really sparkles. Topper is a good example of the quality that TV is capable of offering, but too seldom achieves.

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